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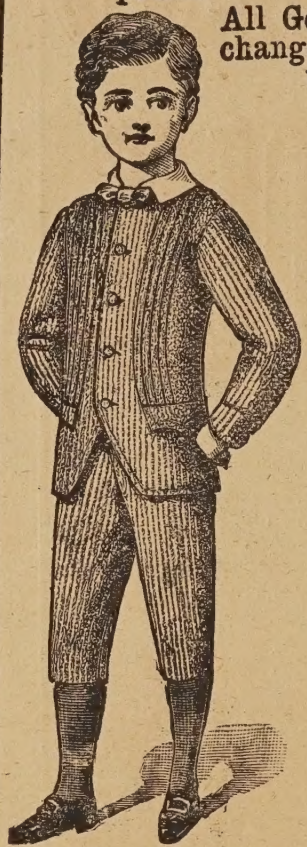

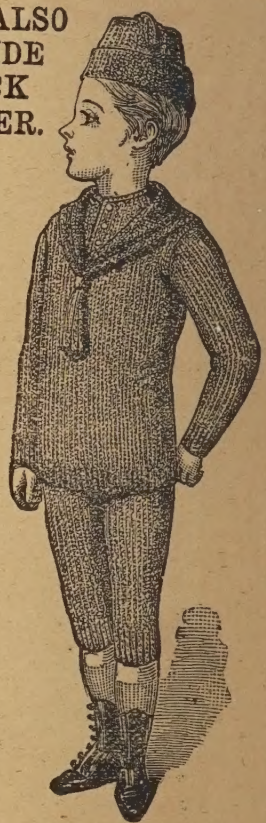

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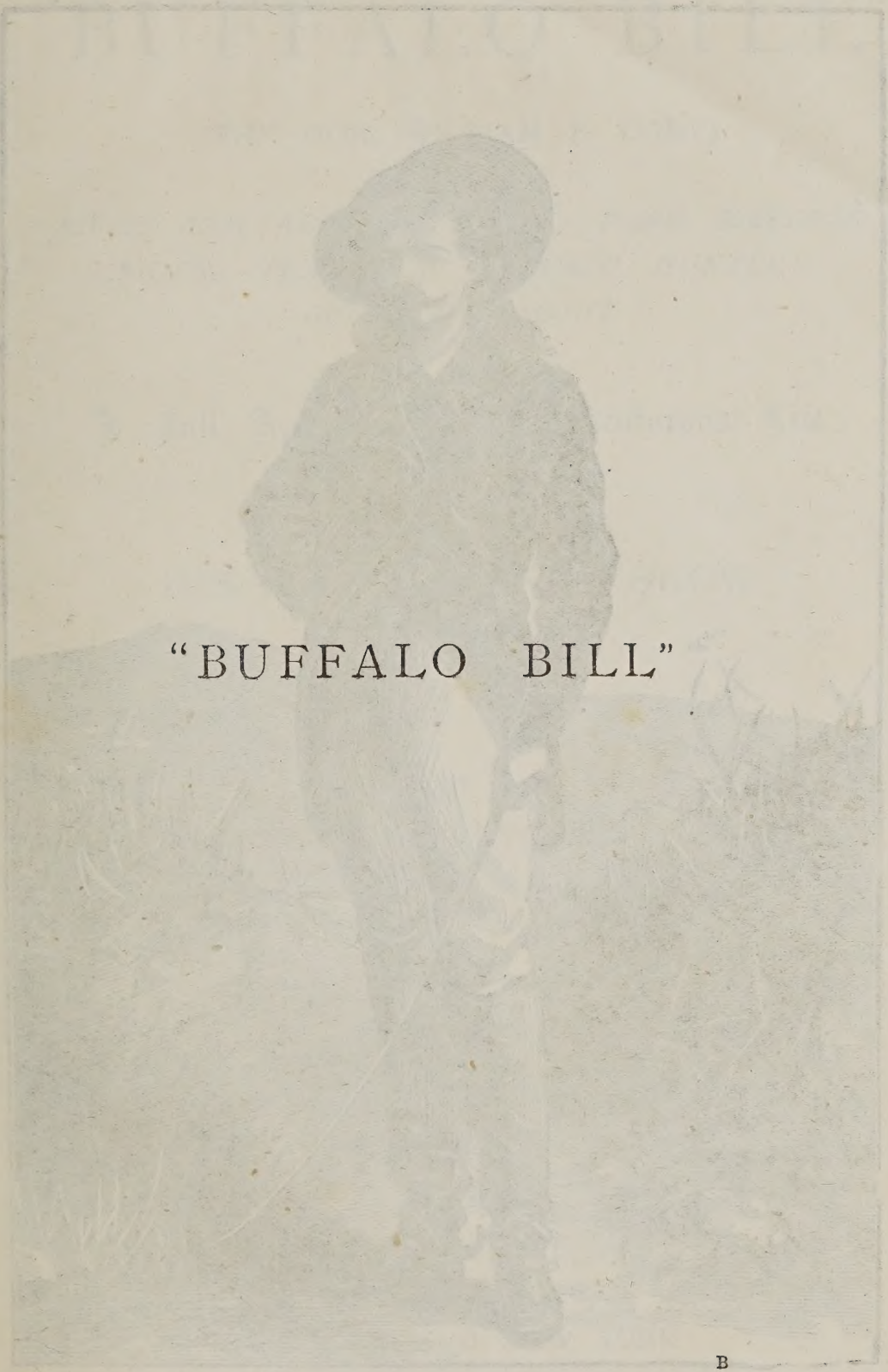

"BUFFALO BILL"

"BUFFALO BILL" (W. F. CODY).

"BUFFALO BILL"

(THE HON. WILLIAM F. CODY)

RIFLE AND REVOLVER SHOT; PONY EXPRESS RIDER; TEAMSTER; BUFFALO HUNTER; GUIDE AND SCOUT

A Full Account of his Adventurous Life

WITH THE ORIGIN OF

HIS "WILD WEST" SHOW

BY

HENRY LLEWELLYN WILLIAMS

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"BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

THE PIONEER.—A BOYISH EXPLOIT.—THE FIRST FATAL SHOT.

After having for a long period acquiesced in the pictures of the noble red Indian and his prairie and woodland scenes, with which Fenimore Cooper and his imitators made us familiar, the Old World has grown apt to believe with as much whole-hearted credulity in the new presentment by present-day tourists in the Western United States. These rightly show the boundless sea of verdure of "The Prairie" cut up into gigantic farms, tilled by steam and electricity, and armies of men; the mysterious Lone Mountains of Mayne Reid swarming with miners, Chinese and "Digger" Indians, and burrowed with mines, in the depths of which

magnificent modern machinery toils like the buried Cyclops; the great river of Gerstæcker's romances a mere highway for steam-tugs towing miles of barges; the beaten tracks of multitudinous buffalo herds raked by the bone-hunter that knife handles of "the best African ivory" may be sold cheaply in European marts; the plains where thousands of wild horses coursed, crossed by their degenerate offspring, hauling in harness the emigrants' waggons—and, most depressing blow to former enthusiasm, no more an Uncas or a Delaware, but wretched copper-skin outcasts cowering at the railway station to have *gratis* transportation over the hunting grounds of their forefathers to the western substitute for a workhouse and a soup-kitchen, the Indian agency and the model farm.

Nevertheless, the West and the South-west of North America still contain immense tracts where romance may long live, and, in the career of one of the sons of those regions, which is now to be placed before the reader, there will be seen much to verify the saying of Georges Sand: "There are lives which are more like romance than romance itself."

William Frederick Cody was born in Scott County, State of Iowa, in 1843. His father was one of the pioneers to that part of the United States, where scenes of dangers and hardships were common environments to the log cabin of the settler.

Before Will was nine years of age he figured prominently in an incident which gained him a name among men who are apt to rate physical gifts above any others.

The school was five miles from his father's house, and, therefore, the lad rode there and back and home to dinner upon a pony of his own. The ponies of that region are the but partially broken mustangs, famous for all natural and acquired equine vices; this one, in particular, was a vicious, tricky beast which the neighbours foretold would be the young rider's death some day. There was a prospect of a double tragedy, generally, as young Cody was wont to take up on the crupper of this Bucephalus a playmate who was by a couple of years his senior. This David Dunn was son of so poor a settler that there was no horse at home at his disposal; out West there is almost the same scorn for a person who goes even a little

distance on foot as in Spain or Mexico or the Southern States before the great Civil War reduced the descendants of the cavaliers to the universal and proverbial "Shanks' mare."

Poor as the boys were as a mouthful for the lawless folk who might be met on the road, the horse was still a tempting bait, and the youths went armed to defend their steed. Cody, especially, was happy in the possession of a revolver, one of the old-pattern Colts, with the barrels revolving, the ancient "coffee-mill" or "pepper-box," laughed at all over the West in the present day, but, in its time, a marvel to those who only knew of double-barrel pistols at the most. Will had already the love for weapons which characterizes the destined sharpshooter, and it was noticed that none of his playthings was prized like this wondrous piece of fire-arms mechanism.

One of these days, when returning from school on the pony, it was frightened by the approach of a storm, and, pulling out its hobbling-rope peg, or *lariat*-pin, it scampered away over the prairie like the "Rascal" it was prophetically called. It is worse than a wild-goose chase to follow a runaway mustang, a

proof of which we shall have to furnish much later on in our record of William Cody, in a mishap which occurred to himself.

But the pursuit was rendered more than hopeless by the storm threatening a violent rush, as is only too common in a country where the "Northers" rush down from the Bay of Hudson or the Rocky Mountains, gaining power at every hundred miles.

The distressed and terrified urchins ran off the road, at best merely an infrequently travelled trail, and took shelter in the only refuge that presented itself. This was an abandoned log-hut, sure to be unoccupied, even under the pressure of a tempest, as it was said to be haunted. Among populations of imperfectly-educated people, superstition is prevalent, and the training of the young falls too often into the hands of servants and labourers of low degree in intellectual enlightenment. Our two boys hastened to this ill-omened place out of mutual bravado rather than from fear of a shower which would little injure their home-spun clothes.

The cabin stood in the midst of some thick woods, a distance away from the track, and

looked melancholy, and fully in harmony with the legend. It was to the effect that an unknown murderer or murderers had destroyed the whole family of one Foster Beal, its head, his two sons, and "the women folks and girl creatures." Since six years the mystery of this "one fell swoop" slaying "the chickens, sire, and dam," had never been revealed, and the shadow about the dwelling caused everybody to keep remote.

At least the pair might reasonably rely on not being disturbed by earthly visitors, and so they entered the cabin by an open window, a mere airhole, which served as an embrasure for musketry in event of an attack, and they huddled together inside, looking out at the storm with an intensity due greatly to the reverse of desire to peer round at the deserted, uncanny interior.

Before the storm-burst was quite overhead, they saw three or four horsemen, dimly outlined on the deep black cloud, coming up in that very direction at a gallop. There could be as little doubt that they were coming to the haunted cabin for cover as that they were members of a gang of horse-thieves, who had won a miserable renown

in the country. It was not possible for the boys to leave the cabin by door or window without being seen; and, as the only alternative, they climbed up a notched pole, the primitive ladder common in the West, from the Mexican silver mines contemporary with the Spanish invader to the two-storey fur-stores of the Alaska hunters. Thus they reached the low upper-storey of the cabin, where hay and other provender were formerly stored, and where starved vermin were now harboured. There they lay down, smothering the inclination to cough and sneeze from the dust they raised, to peep below through cracks of the unfastened, loosely laid boards.

Meanwhile, the riders had rushed up, pulled in their horses with the abruptness characterising Western equestrianism, and alighted. One of the four seemed to know the spot, for he directed them where to "rope out" their animals to pins in the ground at the end of their lariats (*la riata*), after unsaddling them. Then all entered the ruin by the window used by the lads. They tore down pieces of the plank-lining, and had kindled a fire on the hearth when the storm broke furiously. For a time,

its noise and the rattling of the house under its pressure, prevented any conversation; but as soon as its violence had somewhat abated, the fellows raised their voices, seemingly to dispel the gloom, mental and material, of the haunted habitation.

Over the meal for which eatables were provided from their saddle-bags, and amid the garrulity inspired by the whiskey which they copiously drank, the one who had shown familiarity with the cabin, avowed his grounds for that knowledge.

In coarse, feelingless language, which deepened the horror of the tale, he related how he and a former gang had stormed the home and slain its tenants. The boyish listeners shuddered in their overhead covert, but what was the feeling of Will Cody when he heard the callous ruffian propose that the next victim of the league should be his (Cody's) father.

"That's the ticket, pardners," said this scoundrel. "Old Cody's ranch! I tell you what, he's a thriving man—no drinking, no going out on the loose—a stiddy, saving settler—he's got the gold dust, for certain sure."

The idea appeared agreeable and feasible,

and the voices lowered in debate on the plan of operation. The eavesdroppers were more and more horrified, and David was far from recovering some control as speedily as his playmate, who was the first to speak, saying:

"Dave, something's got to be done, and mighty quick. Look here, you must let your folks at home know what these beauties are carrying on. You see, there's a sashless window, under that shutter."

There was an opening, practicable for a boy, and its covering was readily and noiselessly removed from its rusty nails. Dunn, who yielded in all respects to his stronger-nerved companion's dictates, glided out feet foremost, hung for a moment to receive final instructions, and dropped safely to the ground. Thence he was to go home as the nearest point for assistance, and acquaint his father with young Cody's predicament.

The latter had a repeating pistol, it is true, and he knew how to use it, but this was the first time when he was set face to face with desperate men who had already confessed to murders scarcely less cold-blooded than the immolation of the Beal family.

In half an hour after David Dunn had taken his departure the heavy rain dwindled to a harmless shower, and the solitary watcher saw them rise to prepare for their dread journey with a goal so sinister for those dear to him.

From the hole in the ceiling Will Cody commanded both the door and the window, and levelling his pistol, he shouted in the roughest voice he could assume, despite his very natural emotion :

"Hold! I have you covered. He's a dead man who moves, with me having 'the drop' on him.'

The men of the West have imbibed much of the aborigine's idea of the folly of throwing away a life for any but a substantial personal gain. The Californian miner's reply to the life-assurance agent fairly expresses this sentiment. He said : "I cannot see the gain in an investment where a man has to die to realise." Consequently, the four men stood spellbound for a time, the leader falling to the rear where he tried to draw his pistol unperceived, but the boy saw the barrel gleam in the firelight and, fortunately aiming well, shot him through the heart. He fell dead whilst the image of the

flash lingered on the outlaws' eye. They paused even more like statues than before, and only one found voice to inquire:

"I say, *pard.* (partner), who may you be?"

But Cody was afraid to speak lest the quality of his tone should betray his youth and agitation. So they heard nothing, and could see only the six holes in the revolver-barrels peeping over the edge of the trap-hole, held in an apparently unshaking hand. They crouched back with their dead brother stretched at their feet, all in the full glare of the fire, but the unknown slayer in impenetrable darkness.

The time seemed interminable. The silence was broken now and then by challenges to the watcher above, but never came an answer. They suggested among one another to "man a rush" for the door, but its fastenings might hold so long as to offer them as targets to the unseen marksman, and they dared not run the risk after the evidence of his skill.

To both sides, in this singular "fix," no doubt the minutes seemed hours, but not an hour and a half had actually elapsed since

David Dunn's flight before horses were heard without. The boy had had the cunning to ride away on one of the bandits' horses, and he brought the succour thus speedily.

The three men had no time to face the new enemy before several gun-muzzles were thrust in between the logs, where the mud had fallen out, and a stern voice shouted :—

"Boys, you are our 'meat'."

The door was burst in, and ten or twelve settlers leaped in at the opening with a cheer which was music to the youth overhead. Farmer Dunn was at the front of them.

Overpowered and between two fires, the border ruffians surrendered without a blow. They were recognized as old offenders in horse-thieving—the most heinous of crimes on the frontier, to say nothing of others. Judge Lynch organised his court, and the trio were found guilty and used as decorations for trees before the haunted house where, it is to be hoped, the avenged spirits were "laid."

Both the boys were heartily praised, but young Cody most, for not only was his "grit" proven, but he had "killed his man."

Lest the authenticity of this early exploit be demurred at, let us hasten to say it is recorded by Colonel Prentiss Ingraham, U.S.A., who claims to have shared the blanket and camp-fire of our hero himself.

CHAPTER II.

THE EMIGRANT TRAIN.—THE BOY GUIDE.—LIFE AT THE NEW PURCHASE.—JUVENILE DUEL.

SHORTLY after this striking episode of life on the extremes of civilisation, Mr. Cody, Sr., determined to break up his home and obey the wondrously general impulse to "go West." In most small towns of the Eastern seaboard, there will be found two portions of the cemetery; in the one, trim, tidy, flower-adorned, the immediate predecessors of the townsfolk; in the other, neglected and unkept, the fore-fathers sleep, of whose name not a single bearer has been known thereabouts for two generations: all had "gone West."

The little train of the Codies consisted of two large waggons with tilts, drawn by three pair of mules and horses to each; one carried the children, the other the household effects. These vehicles, by the rude muse of the wilder-

ness, are called "prairie schooners," not merely because they are the ships of that desert, but because, at a distance, the white canvas—even if tanned, the alkali dust coats it as with white-wash—gleams over the green meadow, with grass so tall as to hide the wheels and horses, like sails on the ocean. The party was composed of Mr. Cody, his wife, little Bill, scarce nine years of age, and two twin-sisters of the boy. The man rode at the flank or rear, with the inevitable long rifle at the saddle-bow, and often left the van to his son.

Familiar with meadow and woodland sights, expert at shooting, cool, understanding responsibility, Will Cody was not out of place as the outlyer. Let there be no surprise at this precocity. There is a Californian legend, embalmed in bucolic poetry, of a boy of *three* shooting a bear, and a better-authenticated tale of a boy of nine lost with his child sister in the wild western woods, building huts of boughs, laying in store of berries, and going a full week along a river which he remembered as flowing into a lake where was his home.

The Codies settled near Fort Leavenworth, in a log-house built under a wood on the

prairie. The subject of our memoir, after the hard work of building the new dwelling, led the usual life of frontier youth: he went hunting, fishing, roaming, to the Fort where the news came from the East, West, and North-west, mostly bearing upon the market price of articles of trade with colonists, fur-hunters and Indians, and, week by week, he added to his reputation as a "promising citizen."

Near the Cody homestead was the Vennor Farm. Mr. Vennor had come from Chicago, where he had had great expectations from a wealthy brother, but the watch-pot had not boiled, and he came out to Fort Leavenworth and settled there. He had a son and daughter, the former aged fourteen, the other eighteen, that is to say, some seven or eight years older than Will Cody, who, like most of the few youths in the neighbourhood, promptly had an attack of calf-love for the beauty. Often she came to the Cody farm to chat with the twin-sisters, and soon Bill was her subject and slave. He gathered for her wild flowers and fruit, plaited yarn and horse-hair ornaments for her pony after ancient Indian patterns, offered

her rarities which fell in his traps or were hooked from the river, and so on through all the gamut of a boy's worship for a mature enslaver.

His most dangerous rival was a young gallant from Leavenworth City, with handsome face and figure, and with plenty of cash, that rarity on the border, where business transactions are mainly carried on by exchange of commodities. The rumour ran that he was a gambler, and otherwise morally reprehensible, and his name was coupled with several very seriously disgraceful occurrences in the town. Besides his monetary advantage and personal gifts, he could sing well and talk admirably, and he was considered sure to "walk over the course." He seemed to the general eye to be thoroughly in earnest in his courtship, and, as the Vennors were not rich, his disinterestedness was praised by the old crones, who believed that Miss Nannie Vennor would reform Mr. Hugh Hall, and that "reformed rakes make the best husbands."

There was more earnest purpose in Mr. Hall's wooing than anybody could suspect. About four years back he had been studying

law in a Chicago solicitor's office, where it fell to him to make the draft of a will for the brother of Richard Vennor. The terms ran that five years would be allowed for the finding of the heir or his family, in the default of which the property was to be distributed in charity. The death of Robert Vennor set Hall on the alert to find the inheritor. He had only meant, perhaps, to gain a reward from the lucky man for the first news of the windfall; but the view of Nannie Vennor gave a new aim to his movements. He resolved to wed her, obtain what he could convert into cash, and levant. What perplexed him in his scheme, and enhanced his villany, was the fact of his being already provided with a wife.

By the simple chance of this rogue and two of his companions choosing, for plotting, a grove in the shade of which Bill Cody was ensconced for fishing, enough of Hall's true standing and design came out for the youth to be on his guard. After the conference, due to the newcomers having heard that Hall's wife was trying to discover his whereabouts, and being wishful to give him warning, the two fellows returned on horseback to Leavenworth. Hall lingered to

reflect on the situation, and was in a reverie which much resembled a doze. His horse, however, which was grazing near at hand, would, no doubt, give an alarm. On the spur of the moment, young Cody thought it the wiser plan to shoot the wretch offhand with his faithful revolver; but this summary execution was too repugnant to him, and he compromised with his first inclination, by prudently stepping behind a tree, and hailing Hall till he awakened.

The man saw he was under fire, and he swore angrily at the trap, knowing the boy's reputation as brave, bold, and excellent with the revolver, a weapon with which he has ever remained an expert. The younger of the pair, who were glaring at each other, ordered the elder to go before him to Farmer Vennor's, where he proclaimed it his intention to denounce him upon the evidence of his treachery which he had overheard, and which he pieced together with much clearheadedness and quick wit. The fellow pretended to be about obeying, but as the boy was coming out from behind the tree, he whipped forth a pistol, and essayed a snap shot. Its bullet buried itself in the bark

over Cody's head; not unnerved, he returned the fire, and broke the right arm of the back-woods buck. But nearly all men on the border are double-handed to a degree which would have delighted that champion of ambi-dexterity the late Charles Reade himself. Hall picked up the revolver with his left hand and the two fired together as the second round in this impromptu duel without witnesses.

Again Hall aimed too high, although the bullet turned the boy's hat round on his head, whilst, on the other part, the latter's shot entered the opponent's body. The victor uttered his sorrow, for his feeling was of commiseration, whatever the villany of the fallen man, and, receiving no answer but piteous groans, he leaped upon the horse of Hall, and rode to Vennor's.

The farmer and he returned to find the fellow cold dead.

His confederates at Leavenworth were hunted up and allowed a term in which to quit Kansas, under pain of a short shrift and a long rope. They made ample confession of their friend's guilt, and stated where Hall's wife was living. The neighbours rated Bill Cody more

of a hero than ever, and the Vennor family have always been grateful, "Miss Nannie that was," Mrs. —— that is, now a mother of grown sons, especially sending Christmas gifts to the Cody homestead.

CHAPTER III.

INDIAN TRADING.—HORSE CATCHING.—THE TRIAL AT FANCY SHOOTING.—THE CAPTURE OF THE BLACK STALLION.

Mr. Cody became a trader with the Indians in Salt Creek Valley, Kansas. His boy often accompanied him in the expeditions to distant villages, was left with them as a kind of semi-amicable hostage in his father's absence home, and besides participating in the sports and pastimes of the Indian youths, was allowed to join the hunters, and even a band on the war-path against enemies of their own colour. All this afforded him an insight into the customs and manners of thought among the red brethren, which "came in handy" in after years when he was a pilot to excursions in the territory of hostile natives.

As the Indian boys are experienced in catching and riding their scarcely less than wild

ponies, and their white playmate did his best in emulation of their feats, he returned into such civilisation as existed at Fort Leavenworth as perfect a Centaur as any of the redskins.

This was the more fortunate as there was a chance of making money by it, to say nothing of acquiring *kudos*, for Will Cody has always esteemed fame more highly than lucre.

A drove of horses for the cavalry, bought in Texas, where they had been roaming wild on the plains like the herds under the famous White Steed of Gabriel Ferry and Mayne Reid, had broken away in a mass, or "stampeded," as the American-English of the technical Spanish term words it. The main body were soon far away, but a few stragglers remained in the neighbourhood of the fort, where Billy had skill enough to catch them, although his own pony, Rascal, of runaway memory, was not the fleetest of quadrupeds. On his bringing in his third or fourth capture, the quartermaster had kindly remarked :—

"Young man, those horses were wild enough when we received them, Uncle Sam knows! but if they are let keep on getting wilder and

wilder, they will be harder to take than horses that have never known the bit. I tell you what, the Government will stand ten dollars a head for all that can be made to come in. Buckle to it, young man, there's a good thing there!"

This proposition was much to the youth's taste. He prepared during a couple of days for the hard task before him, and in hatching a plan of barter for a speedier animal than poor little Rascal. He had some fifty dollars in coin, pelts and furs and skins, Rascal, and a spare rifle, and these he offered, increasing his bid each time, to a sergeant who had the courser he coveted. But the man was obdurate. For racing, his horse was a little mint to him.

Billy was in despair, till the idea struck him of playing another card. The non-commissioned officer was vain of his marksmanship, and Cody challenged him to shoot for the settlement of the affair: all he had he offered against the "grey." The man wanted the match to come off immediately, as he was confident of his powers; but the officers, who had caught wind of it, and were eager for any novelty to

break the monotony of frontier garrison life, intervened to make an afternoon's diversion of it all.

A day was set at a week's interval, so that the two contestants might practise. The conditions were: ten off-hand shots with the rifle at fifty and at one hundred yards, and six shots with the revolver at:—*a*, fifteen paces from the mark, standing; *b*, six from horseback; *c*, six riding at the target at full speed.

On the appointed day there was an unusual assemblage on the parade ground of the fort. The younger competitor had not omitted to practise, but he had too much confidence in his prowess not to have thought it superfluous. He "came up to the scratch smiling," to use the befitting phrase, whilst the sergeant was called on, from his having won the toss, to fire first. His were five good shots, but the others' were better, and the lad was heartily cheered, for the expectation had naturally been that with the rifle the grown man would show superiority. But it was another story at the longer range; the soldier was also better at standing shots with the small firearm. Still, as in the contest of riding at full speed by the target, Cody

shot more truly, the match was decided to be a tie.

To shoot this off, Cody placed an apple on his pony's head between his ears, and, stepping back to a fit distance, levelled his revolver and blew the fruit to pieces.

"I have another apple, sergeant," remarked he quietly, after the shouting subsided, "for you to try the same on your horse."

But the soldier did not care to run the risk, and handed over the grey horse, with a hope he should have another chance to enjoy possession of him.

"It will not be at shooting," observed an old backwoodsman drily, as the happy boy mounted his prize and rode off home under the unanimous acclamation.

Here he set to training the new acquisition in his own way, and after a few days concluded that he had him well broken in. Thereupon he set forth by himself to find the stray horses. Their feeding ground he had ascertained, and fortunately it had not been changed. It was up a valley at some miles, where at dusk he saw them, about five hundred. He had to camp overnight, but began his operations in

the dawn. One time after another he stole upon stragglers and, lassoing them, led them out to a place of security, where he hobbled them properly for the drive-in. It was slow and irksome, but he did conduct them to the fort, where the reward was promptly paid. This he took to his mother, to whom he was always dutiful.

He went on the renewal of his enterprise with a better heart. He had found his new steed to be faster and firmer-bottomed than any of the strays, with the exception, perhaps, of the chief, a large, gaunt "stud," or stallion, which was very fast. The settlers and people at the fort had asserted that it was a wicked beast, not one of the Government purchases, but the property of a horse thief who had been shot dead on its back one night. They called the horse "Satan," a name which augured much viciousness and wiliness.

As formerly, he reached the horses' haunt at nightfall, and had to camp till dawn. Before he could begin his operations of choosing and picking, he was startled by the thunder of the herd rushing by him in his hiding-place, on their way to drink at the river. The black

stallion led, as usual, and his triumphant neigh almost brought about a discovery of the youth lying in perdu, as his grey began to answer the challenge. A quick pressure on his nostrils and to keep his mouth shut, silenced him, and the cavalcade swept on.

It was a stirring sight in the morning sun: the almost serried mass, with manes and tails waving like plumes, the coats of all colours, the eyes, having already lost the dimness of the brief servitude, gleaming like precious stones. Except the leader, all were "paint" horses, those oddly-marked ones which are favourites of the circus performers. The leader was wholly black, and worthy for his beauty to be in his place, whatever his fighting qualities, by which he had more probably gained it.

When the herd entered the stream the youth rode out of his cover, with his lasso loops on the swing around his head. At the sound all the drinking animals lifted their heads: it was the very nick of time. The running noose circled round the neck of the black, and, with the tremendous jerk the grey gave, Satan met his downfall with a completeness which would

have rejoiced a backwoods preacher wishful to point a moral with this simile.

Cody leaped down and secured the prize with the kind of improvised head-gear called in that part a "bow-stall." A turn is taken with a rope, of the usual material or of hide, around the horse's head, between eyes and nostrils, and one end is passed over the head, back of the ears, and tied on the opposite side, after being brought through under the loop. With a second noose around the jaws, the end is brought back to form reins, and then the animal can be controlled more effectively than even by a severe curb bit.

Loosening the lasso, Cody sprang upon the choked animal as it bounded to its feet and after the flying herd. Then began such a conflict as is common in the region of wild horses: the stallion sought to dislodge the rider by every trick in its knowledge, but all were foiled, and the attempt to use his teeth was punished by a pull at the bow-stall. Like most horses thus maddened by sudden constraint, Satan dashed forward after the herd, for help or sympathy. The grey followed its rider upon the other, but only as far as the edge of the

mass. The black alone penetrated it, and pierced clean through, the Mazeppa clinging to the bare back and the headstall as the only means of avoiding the death of being trampled by a score of hoofs.

The usual course of mustang rough-riders is to keep the new pupil hard on the run till he falls thoroughly exhausted. But Cody had noticed that his grey, afraid to pass into the press of its kind and otherwise alarmed, had taken to a mad flight over the prairie in another direction to that pursued by the number.

Not to lose the bone for the shadow—for the capture was not yet assuredly his subject—the youth quickly made up his mind to a course, worthy of Alexander and his "fiery, untamed steed." He subdued the stallion with the rope bridle alone, and what is more wonderful, turned and guided him in chase of the grey. In the midst of his fatigue and excitement he was delighted to find that the horse he was upon was more speedy than the grey, which he overtook.

By this time the new mount had acknowledged its master, and yielded to having the

saddle and bridle transferred from the grey, which became the led one, bearing the stores and rifle in a triumphant return to the fort.

Really fleet horses are eagerly bought by the officers, the safety of whose heads often depending upon their "Americans" being superior to the Indians' war ponies. The native chiefs, it is to be remembered, carefully select the best for their fighting-days, much as the knights of old reserved chargers solely for the fray and tourney. There were several handsome offers for Satan, but Bill Cody had an eye to the capture of more of the fugitives. Indeed, he succeeded in bringing in still a goodly number; but the offer of ten dollars a head set others on the track, and the youth had to be content with what he had gained and the possession of Satan and Little Grey.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BORDER RUFFIANS.—MAKING FREE WITH PROPERTY IN THE FREE STATE.

JUST before the outbreak of the great Civil War in the United States, there were districts where passions were hotly seething. As on the Virginian border the raid of John Brown, 1859, stirred up the negro slaves, so, on the Kansas border, 1855, there was fierce agitation about the same question of Abolition of Slavery. The settlers from the south and south-east, mostly having slaves in their households and for labourers, naturally held to the right of property over their "human chattels." The settlers from the north and north-east were, as naturally, upholders of the Free State doctrine, that any slave entering into Kansas became a free and independent citizen.

It was with this latter party that Mr. Isaac Cody sided, and he did so prominently. On

one occasion, when he was addressing a meeting, he was badly wounded in an attack by "the Border Ruffians," as the slave-holders' most active and lowest partisans were styled. When he was in health again, and able to work on the farm, he found his name was on the black book, for he was harried and harassed more than once, and it was furthermore no secret that he was even sentenced to death by hanging by some of the secret societies prevalent in the tormented State.

Once, when his son was in the city, he heard of an immediate essay to carry out this decree, and rode home with the warning on the black horse. At the outskirts he was recognised by the rabble mustering for the errand, and hotly pursued. He ran the gauntlet and outstripped the band, with time to let his father escape. The disappointed men beat the youngster for having baffled them, and their leading spirit, one Jake M'Kandlas, took away Satan. He had always distinguished himself by a love of horseflesh unfettered by any overnice scruples on the law of mine and thine.

This was a heavier blow to the boy than the corporeal ones, and he vowed to regain his

property at any cost; but the bandits were not easily come at by a single foe. In fact, the "Jay Hawkers," as they pleasantly dubbed themselves, augmented their ranks every day.

After some weeks of a peace which was no peace from the continual worry of false alarms, two of the Jay Hawkers rode up to the Cody log-house after the master. They would not accept denial, but "went through" the house in a scrutiny, and, installing themselves at ease, ordered the Misses Cody, now girls of ten, to get them supper. A meal is usually quickly prepared when the guests flank their plates with a bowie-knife and a revolver. At the height of the feast, Cody and his son came home; but, fortunately, one of the girls managed to slip out and warn them of the untimely visitors. Less fortunately, the farmer had had his wound break out afresh, and his ride in suffering had given him a fever. He crept upstairs and went to his bed, unable to venture farther on horseback, cost what might his staying at home.

Will Cody went boldly into the kitchen, which is the dining-room of log-houses, and was immediately bantered by M'Kandlas about the excellence of Satan, whom he had

"borrowed." As the tart answer only excited the ruffian's wrath, Bill understood his mother's glance, and prudently walked out of the room. He was joined almost instantly by one of his sisters, who told him that the men thought his father had accompanied him home, and they were swearing to search the place again.

Bill Cody and his mother went up to the bedroom, where the farmer had gone off into a troubled sleep. He was in fever, certainly. Without awakening him, the youth left his mother at the bedside, and went out on the landing to keep guard.

He was none too soon, for both the men came out of the kitchen, pistol in hand, and began ascending the stairs, until challenged to stop by the watcher. As no reply was made but a taunting laugh, the latter fired, and one man, wounded, fell down the stairs, carrying his mate with him. The latter was M'Kandlas, who probably feared that both of the Codies were commanding the stairwayhead. He abandoned his comrade, and ran out to the tree where their horses were fastened up.

But young Cody was already at the window overlooking the scene, and he called out :

"Let *my* horse alone, or I'll fire on you with my rifle."

Jake immediately preferred the other animal to Satan, and rode away. The badly wounded bandit was put in a waggon and carried to the nearest surgeon until he could be taken home. Justice did not condescend to notice such "little difficulties."

After this tragic episode, as the political strife seemed appeased for a time, young Cody was made to suffer from the arts of peace even more than from those of internal war.

CHAPTER V.

THE RISING HERO WHIPPED.—SCHOOL AGAIN.—SECOND ATTACK OF CALF-LOVE.—A ONE-SIDED DUEL.—"BULLWHACKING."

It was warrantable for the hope of the Codies to think himself a man after these valiant acts, although only in his twelfth year; but his mother found all her son's accomplishments to be with horses and weapons of war, and never comprising "book-learning," which is essentially a craze of the "Bostons" or New England people. The good lady, therefore, urged him to go to a school near by.

We fancy that the description of a wild Western school and its master, given by the native wit, "Bill Nye," applies here: a wooden shanty, rough, uncouth, unkempt hobbledehoys, and a hard-fisted blacksmith turned professor, who backed up his ferule with a revolver of portentous dimensions.

It is needless to say that the superabundant high spirits in Master Cody earned him many a flogging; but these little affected the budding hero, inured to hard life and harder blows.

The quality of the bystanders alters the degree of punishment, however, and the Eastern school innovation of the lambs and goats being educated in the same room—we mean, the class being of both boys and girls—brought about a change in Cody's careless endurance of chastisement.

Among the young ladies, who sat on the forms behind the front row devoted to the ruder sex, was a well-to-do settler's daughter, one Mollie Hyatt.

She was pretty, and, with American precocity, responded to the quick fancy of Master Cody, undeterred by his previous *amourette.* The bully of the school, arrogating a sultan's power over the bevy of beauties, however, cast his sheep's eyes upon Miss Mollie, and, being much stronger and older than Cody, he seemed so astonished at the presumption of the latter, that an explanation was demanded.

Unhappily, Nestor heard this quarrelling of

Hector and Achilles, and, choosing to believe Hector's version of the difference, he called up Master Cody to be "horsed," as never before in his equestrian experiences, and severely flogged him before the whole school. Since Miss Hyatt had come there, Cody had been on his best behaviour, and this rarity in the way of chastisement cut him up more deeply than the cowhide, to say nothing of a thirst for revenge upon Stephen Gobel, his rival.

The very next day Gobel, who still pestered the pair of juvenile sweethearts, not being content with the ignominy he had cast, pulled down an arbour built by Paul for his Virginia. In return, Bill tried to pull down Steve. A desperate pugilistic combat ensued. But Cody was overmatched, and in his double pain from heavy blows and impending defeat, he whipped out a pocket-knife, which he had to open between his teeth, and stabbed his almost conqueror in the side. Bill rushed away through the frightened school-children to where his pony was hobbled, and rode off madly.

On the road he came up with a waggon-train going west, in whose "boss" he recognised an old friend of his father's, one who warmly re-

ceived him, and made light of the story which he told with much emotion. One Gobel more or less little distressed the Westerner, who, indeed, suggested the train going into camp whilst he and his teamsters went back to the temple of learning and "cleaned it out." This vandalism being objected to, the matter was compromised by Cody accompanying the caravans. A man rode to his home to tell of his whereabouts, and on his return he brought a note from Mrs. Cody to say Gobel was not much hurt, although it would perhaps be wise for the offender to keep away till the family resentment blew over.

For months Bill Cody was learning the science of ox-team driving or "bull-whacking," since most of its disciples do not overburden themselves with delicate touches, but confine themselves to belabouring the beasts whenever they do not go smoothly. From this experience he became thoroughly acquainted with horned cattle in subjection, and obtained that mastery of the teamster's whip at which even the foremost Australian stockman can hardly hope to excel him. To hear the loud crack of his whip sends a shudder of awe down the whole column

of a bullock-train, and would make a rhinoceros's hide creep.

When Cody returned home, Miss Hyatt was in love elsewhere, and the Gobels had forgiven the boyish conflict. Besides, the inter-State war was at a crisis.

CHAPTER VI.

A BORDER RAID.—THE SUPPRESSION OF A "NIGGER WORSHIPPER."—THE FIRST RAISING OF HAIR.

YOUNG CODY had, in fact, returned into a pot boiling over. The dissensions about slavery were at their height. But to see the reunited family in the evening, in the now tolerably comfortable log-house, one would have thought it remote from fear of any descent of savages, red or white. On such a night, whilst the white-haired and patriarchal-looking Mr. Cody was reading prayers at bedtime, with his son, his daughters, and wife by his side, there was an alarm from the gallop of horses towards their dwelling.

As the Indians were much disturbed by the certainty of a war between the whites, during which they expected to profit greatly, and might count on many excuses for their innate longing to fight, all supposed it was one of their forays.

But they were worse than red savages who approached. They heard a shout in English as the large mounted troop halted before the door.

Mr. Cody, somewhat reassured, opened it and stood on the threshold. The riders were irregularly dressed, but all armed to the teeth; their aspect was not encouraging.

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

"*You* are wanted, you black-hearted 'nigger-worshipper,'" was the answer; "and I—*Colonel* M'Kandlas—have come to fetch you."

It was the ancient enemy of this humble house, self-appointed commander of a guerilla corps, anticipating the proclamation of war between the Southern and Northern States by outrages on political opponents.

"As for warrant—there's my warrant," he went on, deliberately aiming a pistol at the father and shooting him dead before his horror-stricken family, with the open Bible on the hospitable board behind him.

The murderer was going to ride off amid the approval of his fellows, when Bill Cody cried out for him to stop, and he boldly proclaimed his resolution to be avenged on them all for this

crime: "I will kill every father's son of you before the beard grows on my face!"

They believed him, and they would have crushed him before he could begin carrying out this vow, but for the mother throwing herself between. Besides, their scouts signalled the proximity of a U.S. cavalry company, and the party galloped away, leaving the wretched family alone with the dead.

It is easy to imagine that when the war between the Federals and Confederates broke out in 1861, Bill Cody, with this outrage to repay upon the partisans of the Southern States, should espouse the cause of the North. He became herder to drive some government cattle to the army of General Albert Sydney Johnson. It was marching against the Mormons at Salt Lake, who were brooding over an outbreak against the powers at Washington, in this moment of acute distress. The Mormons had lately been held up as a blot on the United States as black as the Southerners, the same class of reformers who opposed slavery esteeming polygamy as no better. As the Mormons have always contrived to be friends with all the Indians, they would have no difficulty in sending

them on the warpath against the settlers. If this was generally done, communication between the East and California would have been cut, and serious embarrassment must have occurred. There were not wanting men in the Golden State who proposed setting up an independent empire of the Pacific and keeping out of the war altogether.

Hence General Johnson's expedition.

As far as Cody was concerned, "the beef-herd" to which he belonged had no adventures until old Fort Kearney was reached.

The train camped in its vicinity, and most of the drivers and drovers were enjoying "a pipe and a snooze" after noonday meal, under the waggons, including our hero, with three or four on the look-out. Nobody expected an attack from any quarter.

Suddenly there were shots, the red men's warwhoop and the rapid hoof-falls of a band of braves. The three guards were killed instantly, and the cattle stampeded. The bull-whackers sprang to their feet, rallied and met the charge of savages with a volley from their yagers, or short, thick guns, resembling the Mexican *escopeta* or our blunderbuss. Their ball-and-

buckshot checked their advance. But as their position was untenable, the train-master ordered retreat to the South Platte River, where the bank would be a rampart. Mounted Indians seldom charge white men behind any breast-work.

The men were retiring when Cody reminded them of the wounded, two in number, shot in the leg and side respectively, and quite disabled. The Indians would have scalped them, at all events, and perchance have treated them even more barbarously. So they were lifted up and carried to the bank at a run before the reds recovered from the volley. The man wounded in the side died before they arrived in shelter.

The council they held came to the conclusion that retreat must be continued to the fort, to be reached by a raft of driftwood and cut poles for the wounded, the others to wade in the shallow water as close in to the bank as possible, which would serve as rampart. The Indians, cheered by their success so far, and always prone to follow up a retreat to cut off stragglers, were only kept at bay by the guns.

Night brought no cessation of the pursuit,

and there were several laggards from sheer fatigue; the boy Billy was the most exhausted, and he was the hindmost. He was toiling along in the dark when an Indian suddenly appeared, dark in the moonshine on the bank, which he was clambering over. It was a scout of the enemy who was well aware of the fugitives' course, but from eagerness to get a shot, or from the bank deceiving him, he missed foothold and slid down the treacherous earth fairly into the water. The sight of Cody, on whom he bid fair to precipitate himself, drew from him a yell. Bill replied with a rifleshot so promptly, that he died more by that bullet than by drowning. The boy grasped his feathered topknot and towed him along till some of his friends, who had heard the shot, met him still in the stream.

"It's my Injun!" said Cody.

That was acknowledged, and the trainmaster cut off the scalp-lock, which he presented to the boy, with the saying that it was his first and would not be the last. He received it shudderingly, for the white men are long repugnant to such trophies, even if they do get inured to the habit.

The excitement and the consciousness that the Indian would have been wearing *his* scalp if the bank had not given way under him, invigorated Bill so that he kept up with the band. The Indians gave up the chase when they were near the fort, and made off with their usual fleetness, so that the detachment of cavalry, sent after them, no more found traces of them than of the stampeded cattle.

CHAPTER VII.

"WILD BILL."—BUFFALO HUNTING AND BUFFALO RIDING.—A DUEL À L'AMERICAINE.—CAPTURED BY "THE DESTROYING ANGELS."

YOUNG CODY'S pay from this expedition was the more welcome as the family to which cruel chance had prematurely made him the head, was in circumstances which raised his pay as bull-whacker into a matter of consideration. Knowing this fact of his ability to support them all, which still farther tended to steady and develope the incipient man in him, Bill agreed, with his mother's reluctant consent, to make another waggon journey to the far West. It was in the capacity of an "extra hand," the sort of understudy to the able-bodied teamster, being one who receives full pay but has no recognized position until he replaces some one killed or on the sick-list.

The waggon-train was of twenty-five vehicles, heavily laden, say with six thousand pounds

weight, and drawn by four yoke of oxen a-piece. The chief was an old and experienced man named Lewis Simpson, with an excellent lieutenant; then came Billy as "extra," a night herder, whose duty in watching in the dark is onerous in Indian territory, a *cavallard* (*caballado*) driver who takes care of the lame and stray cattle much as, on English roads, the head drover follows the sheep in a hospital cart and takes up the footsore, and the bull-whackers, one to each cart. All the men were mounted, of course, and armed with large-bore shot-guns and repeating pistols.

Billy Cody rode Satan, as good a piece of horseflesh as when he first re-broke him, and one that his companions much envied him. Some of the men even talked of getting hold of him by hook or crook, but at the first word of violence to possess him, the assistant train-master intervened, saying:

"The boy caught that horse wild—it's his—if he cannot keep it, I can, for him. Pards, the man that lays hands on him settles with me."

This second in command was not the celebrity he afterwards became, but, even so early, his

reputation in his then limited circle was such that Cody felt secure in his property after this offer of championship.

"Wild Bill," the expressive nickname of J. B. Hitchcock or Hickok (being spelt both ways, but the first seems the more authentic), was a remarkable man.

He stood six foot one, was straight as an ash, broad in the shoulder, round and full in the chest, slender in the waist but strong, the hips and thighs large, but hands and feet small. Those who saw John C. Heenan, the American prize-fighter who met Tom Sayers, can form an idea of this American type of athlete. Bill's face was regular in features, with fleshy eagle nose common in the West among those who cope with the similarly aquiline-nosed Indians, in confirmation of Lavater's theory. His eyes were blueish-grey. His brown hair was worn long, as is the fashion of Indian-fighters, that being "the counter-check quarrelsome" to the redman's retaining a scalp-lock on the shaven crown. Both signify that the hair is at the grasp of anybody foolhardy enough to "come take it!"

There was much likeness in person and

nature betwixt the two Bills, and from that moment a friendship sprang up between them which the death of Hitchcock alone terminated.

As the waggon-men kept in good health and the Indians never appeared, the young "extra" was detailed off as the hunter of the party. He would go ahead and shoot what game he could encounter, bringing into the camp-place agreed upon overnight for the next night's, what small game or portions of the greater he could carry on his horse, or marking the spot so that men could ride out and bring it in later.

It was upon one of these lone hunts that he gained the sobriquet of "Buffalo Billy," the similar one of "Buffalo Bill" being acquired on a subsequent occasion for another feat, as we shall show. Having shot an antelope and dismounted from Satan to cut it up for transportation, the horse took to flight. An enormous herd of buffaloes were coming on over the prairie, and the horse had rightly interpreted the nature of the thunderous sound. A man on level ground has no chance of saving himself against such a widely spreading mass unless he find an impassable barrier or quickly rear

one, which has been done by raising a barrier of dead bisons, against which the army splits. This was too desperate an expedient, and Bill rather preferred going to "tree" himself. There was just one solitary cottonwood tree standing at hand, which he had used as a cover when he was stalking the deer. He ran to it, and climbed to a safe seat in the thick of it.

On looking over the herd to see how long it would be in passing, he perceived horses in the rear; on these horses were Indians, who were pricking them with lances to keep them "on the dead run." As the centre of the herd was in a line with the tree, the following hunters would inevitably come directly to it, and infallibly perceive the man. The buffaloes they were sure enough of; they would stop and secure the paleface's scalp.

Here was a certain and a most cruel death; it is only in story books that the plains Indians carry captives hundreds of miles to their towns, where an Indian maiden takes pity on them and helps them to escape; the genuine Indian maiden is brought up more apt to sharpen the sacrificial knives and cheer the participators

in the dance of joy over the successful warriors who come home with "hair" and stolen horses.

In escape there was risk of another kind of death, but he took it.

Bill fastened his rifle to his back, went out upon a limb, and coolly selected a buffalo bull, which, serried in the mass, was bound to come underneath his perch with mathematical accuracy. Upon him he dropped, clutching the long, shaggy mane which irreverent dandy hunters from Europe call a "doormat," and driving in his spurs. The Southwestern spur, it may be mentioned here, has a rowel only less large in circumference than the front steering-wheel of a tricycle. Maddened with pain and terror, the strange steed bellowed, darted forward, gored everything in its course and soon cleft the herd until it led the way.

As the herd happened to proceed towards the train-men's encampment, they came out upon hearing the noise and attempted to head them off. But the troop was irrepressible. It invaded the camp, starting the horses and draught cattle into flight and alarming the men, who could not but feel that their comrade

Billy, still stoutly bestriding the head bull, was rather overdoing this novel way of bringing meat into camp.

It looked as if the rider would be carried off into Texas, in spite of the animal's being somewhat exhausted; but Wild Bill killed him with a rifle shot, and his namesake dropped off the corpse within the camp boundaries.

Thus was earned the title of "Buffalo Billy." The incident has been used in fiction more than once, but we do not know of its occurring in actuality to any other veritable personage.

There were brushes with the Indians, with no fatal consequences, up to Green River, near the Rocky Mountains.

Here Simpson, Billy, and another had dropped behind the train for an afternoon hunt, and were catching up with it at the appointed camping ground when they saw a troop of horsemen approaching. As these were white men and they expected nothing inimical of that complexion, they rode to meet them and exchange the news of the plains for that of the mountains. They were surprised to hear the conventional challenge of brigands of the West:

"Hands up! You are dead men if you resist!"

It was a posse of the Mormon Church militant, under command of Joe Smith, successor to the Smith who was one of the Latter Day Saints and Fathers of the Mormon Faith. These men were members of the inner legion, called by themselves Danites, for "the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein." The Gentiles, as the other barbarians were called by them, know them as "the Destroying Angels," and many a blood-curdling tale is current, on the border, of whole emigrant trains burnt to ashes and every man, woman, and child massacred to prevent the Mormon settlement being overrun by outsiders. Be this as it may, in the present instance, Joe Smith informed Lewis Simpson that he and his two companions were prisoners, and that he had captured the rest of the train, as the Mormons had been let approach under the impression they were United States cavalry.

Bringing the three to the camp, all the articles which could be removed on horseback were

packed for that purpose, and everything else burned in the waggons, one alone being spared for the food supply of the prisoners. These were bidden march away on foot to Fort Bridger. General Johnson was welcome to them as a reinforcement, but the munitions would never reach him. This was a bad look-out all round, as it was autumn and the supplies were much more in request than men.

The train-men took the prospect sullenly and without active remonstrance, mishaps of any magnitude being borne in this country with philosophical calmness, after a little blowing off of steam in extravagant profanity. But Buffalo Billy could not bear to see his splendid horse Satan, who had been recovered after the buffalo ride, taken by a stranger, and he begged for his return on any terms of ransom. At the height of the appeal one of the Angels heard Cody's name mentioned, and recognised it the more readily as he was one of the gang of horse-thieves, counterfeiters, and gamblers, to which Hugh Hall had belonged. Not only had he to avenge his "partner," but his being ordered out of the State by the boy's means.

"I owe you one, young cock," said he there-

upon, "but I am willing to call it evens by sticking to your horse that you are whimpering about."

"Whimper or no whimper, I will fight you for him," said Cody, fiercely.

When "fight's the word" on the prairie few try the office of peacemaker, but the train-men did essay to dissuade the boy, for the bandit was a man double his weight, and no doubt expert at weapons in the same proportion.

Nevertheless the arrangements for a duel were made; the men to be posted at fifty paces, to walk to meet one another at the word and fire with revolvers till one fell. It was meant to be a fatal duel, for Joe Smith was heard to say of Cody that "though a boy in years, he was one of those whom it was meet to be rid of."

The success of the Mormons as regards both dupes and leaders, verifies the saying that "although perhaps no judges of piety, they were good judges of men." Smith had gauged Cody pretty correctly.

The Mormon captain gave the word. Billy stood still; his opponent came on, firing rapidly, till, after four shots, he was dangerously near.

Thereupon out went the youngster's revolver to the level and the trigger was pulled. Down went the man at the flash, "holed" in the leg, and that ended the duel.

But the Danites would not give up the prize, averring that a wounded man could not continue the fight, which was consequently only deferred. Simpson and Wild Bill, at any risk, uttered their opinion of the Mormons to the effect of their being thieves and ordinary horse thieves at that, and it looked as if a many-cornered duel or a massacre must be the outcome.

But Cody appeared suddenly reconciled to the decree. He went, sadly hanging his head, up to his black horse to caress it good-bye, when he abruptly leaped on its saddle in the Indian style, and rode off, lying low, with a yell of defiance and taunting. The Danites shot at him, and some mounted and pursued; but Satan beat the Angels for once.

Shortly after, Billy joined the disconsolate train-men on their way to Fort Bridger.

CHAPTER VIII.

"STANDING OFF" THE REDMEN.—COOLNESS UNDER FIRE.—THE BORDER MENU IN A CLOSE FIX.—SATAN'S USEFUL END.

Not only had the train under command of Simpson met with the disaster narrated, but the Mormons or Indians, much the same thing, had captured others. In the autumn and winter, therefore, the garrison and the dwellers about the fort, there being extra troops and many men of the army service corps and contractors' trains, were put to privations. Mule meat was a standing dish, and fuel had to be hauled from the distant mountains by the men themselves, in the absence of the beasts of burden which had been figured on the bills of fare. The change from the salt pork of ordinary provision, said the men, was "only from *salt horse* to fresh ditto."

The train-men were organised militarily for discipline's sake. Buffalo Billy became Wild

Bill's lieutenant. We believe it was on one of their hunting expeditions that Wild Bill saved his friend's life, in danger from the Ogallala Sioux, and, again, when he was all but drowned in an attack of cramps in the ice-cold Platte River (1860, says "Ned Buntline").

The two Bills were not in company in the spring when Simpson returned eastward, for it was Cody alone who accompanied him as meat provider for the train, a post earned him by his sureness of shooting, and craft in finding game and circumventing it.

One day Simpson and an "extra" on mules went out hunting with Bill on Satan. Well out on the plains, they suddenly saw Indians emerge from a crack in the earth. With their ponies refreshed by the lying in wait, they could surely outrun mules. But Cody would not make his escape alone on the horse, though he ought to have obeyed his captain's orders for him to do so, whilst the two did their best to "stand off" the redskins. He might be able to bring succour from the waggon-train camp. The other alternative was to make a breastwork of the quadrupeds, since nothing in

the way of a barrier was on the prairie, and abide the attack.

They found a slight hollow, such as buffaloes make by wallowing to dry their coats or to dust out the vermin, and on its edges intended to lay their killed horses. They shot them dead, Bill shutting his eyes not to see himself slay his favourite steed. The bodies were dragged round as shields, and the dirt was heaped up with knives to strengthen this singular and yet common barricade on the plains, in grass or sand.

It must always be kept in mind, in judging such fights of a few white men, sometimes one alone, against Indians in force, that the latter do not comprehend courage unalloyed with prudence. The end obtained without loss of life is always an end to be lauded above even greater fruit harvested by the opposite means.

A character like Napoleon's is not understood by the American war-chiefs, since they could not send men to death by troops in order that other men should enjoy the victory.

The Indians were nearly three-score. They carried out their every-day tactics.

Making all the noise and wild gestures they could to appal the whites and confuse their aim, they rushed at the little defence. All three within it fired simultaneously, after which Simpson reloaded all the heavy shot guns, whilst Bill and Woods, the third man, drove the enemy off with revolvers; before they could get out of range the "yager" rifles were ready again, and their departure was accelerated by their discharge.

On the plain lay four ponies and their riders, whilst an additional red corpse testified to the shooting powers of the beleaguered. This may not have much dismayed the enemy, but it gave the others better heart.

The old course was continued: the Indians "circled" round the little fort several times, pouring on it arrows in such profusion and at such various angles that it was not possible to elude them all; besides, some were shot up to fall with an almost perpendicular trajectory, like the Norman arrows at Hastings. All the white men were wounded, albeit not dangerously, whilst the dead mules and horses fairly bristled with shafts. This discharge was done as much to draw fire as in any hope

to do damage; but the border men were too wary to waste ammunition in such a strait.

The Indians, therefore, made another charge in the mass, a rare act on their part, although, it must be acknowledged, they have of late years behaved very much like white men in their military manœuvres.

After the volley from the yagers all three stood up to the on-coming, whooping horsemen, with revolvers. Bill was double-handed at this play, so that the defenders seemed to be four in number. The enemy could not come near enough for a hand-to-hand action through this withering fire. Cody had killed three outright with the pistol shots. Within twenty yards the wild cavalry broke their line and each man scattered for a rallying place out of range.

The defenders reloaded and dressed one-another's wounds. There was a farther respite, of which they took advantage to snatch a bite and strengthen the fortification by earthing it up, whilst the redskins held that powwow or parley which often neutralizes their powers of evil. The white men alone know how to yield individual opinions to a central head, and that saves time in these fights, which, if

not short, usually terminate in favour of the besieged.

Before dusk another charge was made in column, a novel performance for reds, but they were bent on crushing the dauntless trio. The chief, on whom they had cast reproaches for the previous repulses, led them on, but was shot by Cody, and that ruined this onset, with other losses. They drew off to consult, choose a new leader, and try a new course.

It was to pretend to go away after only too palpably forming a line. But Simpson was an old plainsman who "knew nothing if he did not know Injun."

"Pards," said he, "they must take us all for fools who do not know that Injuns never leave their dead unburied. They want to decoy us out into the open so as to ride us down and spear us. It's no go. Here we live until the train boys come to see whar we have gone and lost ourselves."

Their commissariat principally included horse and mule meat. Bill enunciated his repugnance to touch of his favourite saddle-horse, whilst Woods reckoned mule meat good enough for him at such a pinch, and Simpson saw no other

change but Injun, which, he grimly added, with that unsmiling face preventing the uninitiated ever divining whether a Western American is joking or not, "we may have to eat yet."

In the night they had a revelation of the besiegers' presence by a smoke from the prairie grass, fired with design to burn out the little fort. Luckily, the grass was not thick so soon in the year. Still, under what cover the smoke afforded, the redskins advanced only to be repelled for the last time. Their most fiery warriors had succumbed and the more timid successors advised starving out the three that held the fort.

They went into camp with sentries in a ring round the unfortunates.

In the dry season dead animals are not offensive, but, at this, the flesh would probably be carrion, and so taint the air breathed by the whites that their wounds, even if superficial, would become fatally gangrened. Besides, they wanted for water.

However, in the afternoon of that day of suffering, the train-men came up on the trail. The three wretches mustered breath to cheer with glee and relief, and the Indians, respond-

ing with a howl of rage, mounted and fled. The defence was considered by all as a highly creditable performance. But Cody's delight was marred by the sorrow at the loss of Satan.

CHAPTER IX.

TRAPPING ON THE REPUBLICAN RIVER.—THE BROKEN LEG.—ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS. — THE SIOUX. — THE PIKE'S PEAK GOLD-RUSH.— THE DUEL FOR THE GOLD MINE.

THE history of the Fur Trade in America is composed of several chapters. Very good works appear on some points, as the Astoria expedition, chronicled by Irving, the Alaska seal fields by a recent writer, and of the Hudson's Bay Company there exist records which might now be published, since there is no trade secret to keep, But the most adventurous region, that of the Rocky Mountains and Yellowstone Valley, to say nothing of the Sierra Nevada and Oregon, furnished daring and patient explorers, whose lives are but imperfectly and unworthily known by anecdotes and sketches. Except for Captain Ruxton's

unique book, for he lived with the genuine lone-trappers, like Bill Williams, there is little really known about the pioneers whose laying down of trails with their pack-mules traced the highways to where stand cities of our time. Here and there, their names still linger to mounts and rivers and vales, on which they were first among white men to set their eyes; but, from many of them, parlour geographers, army officers eager to gratify a stay-at-home patron's vanity, and ignorant folk have wrested the well-deserved title in favour of some dishonest or senseless one.

The day should come, however, when America will be properly proud of her native heroes; and, then, Bridger, Boone, Bent, Williams, Carson, and their comrades will have statues in market-places, and their lives will be read in schools that the young may be taught to revere those who made the West of America the site of myriads of happy homes.

Trapping is carried on by hunters alone, by pairs, or in companies. Since the railways have connected East and West and North and South, mere slaughterers have succeeded them in the most accessible spots, killing wantonly

with magazine rifles, and despatching the skins and bones to railway stations, whilst the party continues its butcheries.

Cody had made up his mind, soon after returning home and finding his nature would not let him abide in idleness, that a venture at trapping would suit him best.

He joined a party of trappers, and they went upon the upper waters of the Laramie River, but the animals were scarce. As the true hunter will not for shame's sake return home empty-handed, Bill paired off with Dave Harrington, a young man not by far his elder, and they went off to Junction City, Kansas, and thence up the Republican River to Prairie Dog Creek, where beaver abounded. The price of these furs is nothing at all like what it was in the rare old days when beaver hats were worn by all the well-to-do in Europe, before the Paris silk hat superseded it; but still it pays to "get beaver." For bringing to market their pelts, and taking out their food and ammunition, they had a cart and a yoke of oxen. But one of these fell over a cliff, and they were left to face winter without means of transport. This was not the only blow of evil fortune, for, during the

early winter, whilst following elk in the snow-crust, Bill fell and broke his leg.

It was resolved that Dave was to leave his partner as comfortable as possible in a dug-out or artificial cave, roofed over with boughs to be snow-proof, which he filled with firewood and provisions. The limb was set with all the surgical skill of which he was capable, most frontiersmen having a good training in simple fractures and in herbal remedies, part of Indian craft and part old-wife recipes from England and the Continent. Harrington then departed on his hundred miles' journey to the nearest settlement, from which he hoped to return with a yoke of oxen and a sledge to carry away his comrade and the furs—a month's time, with reason, in the deep snow of an untrodden wild.

The youth with the broken limb was left alone. Even to put wood on the fire was painful, and to cook was agony ; but he had to grin and bear it all. The silence was as intense as the frost, or only entered upon by the roar of the tempest and howling of wolves, who scented the human being in the half-buried nook. A thousand horrible suppositions about his friend tormented him night and day, though he never

doubted him. But there were the dangers of losing the true direction, the wild beasts, and the savages. That the latter had not been snow-bound, Bill soon was to know, for he had a visit from some Sioux in war paint. They had seen the unaccustomed smoke issuing from the deepset "lodge in the vast wilderness," and it even more surprised them to find a young paleface on their territory.

Cody recognised the chief as the noted "Rain-in-the-Face." He had seen him at Fort Laramie, where, although he had played some boyish pranks with the dignified old fellow—Indians being obtuse to the chaff beloved by the Anglo-Saxon race alone—he had pacified him by presenting him with a scalping-knife. He saw it at his girdle now, where it had not probably been idle, if any wickedness were going on around the wearer.

They questioned the prisoner, and as his life was forfeit as an intruder's, the council which was held over him seemed rather a waste of words. But old Rain begged his life under the humiliating plea that he was only a boy—and a very playful one, too—undeserving the blow of a warrior's mace or hatchet. Those who had

been thirsting for his blood consented to see the matter in that light, but robbed him of nearly everything in the dugout.

The snow came down upon the place, fortunately helping to keep it warm, for the boy's fire had been put out, and he had much difficulty in making it up anew and keeping off the wolves, with the single revolver which was left him.

In another month, however, Harrington arrived. He had valorously made the double journey, and brought an ox-team and ample provisions. As he had only struggled through the snow with much hardship, they had to be reconciled to remaining there until the thaw.

When it came, the waggon, not sledge, with which Harrington had foresightedly provided himself, was loaded up with the furs, on which the wounded youth was pillowed tenderly. In ten or twelve days, they reached the farm where their "outfit" had been furnished, and where it now was paid for in furs (such is the trustfulness and helpfulness on the border). Thence to Junction City, where the rest was disposed of. Cody went on to his home, crippled for the time being, it is true, but having over a hundred

dollars cash as his share, to gladden the paternal home, from which it lifted a mortgage.

All hurts to bordermen are kill or cure. With a rapidity which sufferers in city hospitals never know, the broken limb mended, and the crutches could be cast away. Cody was a whole man again, and with his tireless activity, looked about for something to be at.

The Pike's Peak gold fever was raging (1859, &c.). He went to the mines and took a claim, but was much "put upon" by bullies because he was the youngest man in camp. "Gold-digging is going to the dogs since milksops and babbies are taking to it," said the grumblers, for even in so busy and hard-working a place as a gold-mining camp, there are soreheaded bears. As Billy had made friends, the first serious move against him resulted in a mêlée, after which several funerals took place.

To increase the unfounded enmity against the boy-miner, and give it such basis as envy would rate enough, he found a vein, "struck it rich," as the saying goes. One morning his rich "claim," of which the fame had spread, was "jumped"—two men had literally jumped into his pit, and he found them there when he came.

They disputed his claim—swore they had once staked it off, and had returned in time not to be deprived of their pre-emption, and ordered the owner to "git out and git away."

Cody's friends met, and, deciding that the intruders must be ousted by main force as they had ejected him, accompanied him back to the place to see fair play. The occupiers were recognized as loafers who had, admittedly, roamed about the camp some months, but never had done any digging, there or elsewhere, unless, peradventure, to "bury their dead."

The judgment was: "Now, *you* must git out."

But up came others of the ruffians' kidney, who opposed Billy and the honest miners. To prevent a general battle, Cody suggested that the fighting should be confined to him and his adversaries originally concerned. He would meet one after the other in revolver fight. This proposition was accepted. The arrangement was, to place the men back to back, but twenty paces apart; they to turn and fire at the word.

Although there was an attempt to help the ruffian in giving the signal unfairly, Billy's shot

went off a little more quickly, and his man fell, shot in the heart. His companion was stopped in his career by being arrested as an escaped prison-bird, by a government detective, and so ended the quarrel over the Boy's Claim. But the blood spilt seemed to have spoilt the luck, for the gold ceased to show. Billy sold out and went home.

CHAPTER X.

FIRST EXPERIENCE AS A GUIDE.—THE SUSPICIOUS CONDUCTOR,—THE EXCHANGE OF SHOTS WITH A ROAD AGENT.—THE RENEGADE UNVEILED.—THE NEW CAPTAIN OF SCOUTS.

When emigrants arrive by railway at the confines of civilization and the untilled country extends before them, illimitably were it not for the Rocky Mountains in the remote distance, their heart fails them in seeing the gigantic difficulty of the way to their "New Eden" with much cumbersome *impedimenta* and totally unenlightened ignorance of the means to advance a mile.

Besides the dangers from Indians and robbers of their own colour, dangers large enough already in their minds fed by preposterous fiction, those Europeans who are practical farmers, are perplexed mortally by the question of how to water the draught beasts and shelter them-

selves each night, saying nothing of the fresh meat supply.

On the frontier, therefore, at "the jumping-off place," the point whence one takes the portentous dive into the Vast Unknown Region, a swarm of guides abounds. Theatrically dressed, all their weapons, silver buttons, spurs, gold-mounted whips, and the like, almost as abnormally large as "property" articles in pantomimes, the greater number seem burlesques on the Roaring Ralph Stackpoles of the minor stage and penny novelettes. These are generally arrant humbugs, who scarcely know a big-horn from a buffalo, or a mirage from a lake, and they are more likely to keep off an Indian squaw's track than invite her lord and master to single combat over the right of way.

There is another kind, usually old men, quiet, with that "reserve force" supposed to be the characteristic of the modern fine gentleman, who make engagements with the honest intention of fulfilling them to the letter. They are veteran hunters and trappers who have been on every acre of ground they propose to lead the caravan through; they will die in defence of their

charges, like a dog, not even caring if their memory is cherished by one of the strangers whose lives they will have saved. The clear, noble, straightforward nature of Natty Bumppo dwells in them.

Buffalo Billy had determined to become such a guide as these, and as a 'prentice hand he offered himself in Leavenworth City. The very position was tendered to him by a train captain. This man's party, consisting of thirty families, had been delayed by the previously engaged guide falling ill. Another was taken in his place, but the master wanted to make assurance doubly sure by having an assistant guide. He liked the youth, although his juvenility was against him, and from sound recommendation, engaged him.

On the morning when the wheeled fleet sailed westward, Bill Cody and his superior in guiding met for the first time. Neither liked the other, and the captain of guides remarked disparagingly at the presentation of his associate:

"Reckon he won't amount to much ten mile out on the prairie."

Cody said nothing, but studied this sneering gentleman narrowly. He gave the name of

Roy Velvet, palpably a "purser's name," but that is nothing on the border where nicknames often eclipse the ones given by godfathers. He was good-looking, but seemed the victim of fast living. He dressed foppishly for prairie work, and showed as much extravagance as regards small arms as an Albanian. He rode a superb bay mare.

For a time all went well. The guide seemed to know his craft; but after a bout of stormy weather, there were such blunders as the camp being set where water was not obtainable, a "dry" camp, the track became bad for wheels, Indians were allowed to surprise them, and so on, until the old hands muttered that Mr. Velvet had lost the way. At last the country became almost impossible to traverse, and a large body of Indians were their constant escort.

To make matters more alarming at this juncture, Assistant Guide Cody had left the train overnight. It is not very unusual for a guide to leave camp, if all is going on well, in order to scout on ahead, but he should give notice of the intelligence to his chief, at all events. He had taken great care to do nothing

of the sort, for his suspicions of the guide's treachery had hourly increased.

On the previous night, noticing him surreptitiously leave the encampment, he had followed him with the utmost stealth. Velvet went to a rendezvous too well chosen to allow the watcher to approach within earshot, but he could see that his superior confabulated with a figure in Indian war-paint and feathers. When the conference was finished and the two plotters parted with a cordial shake-hands not much in harmony with the courtesy of Mr. "Lo! the poor Indian," Bill followed the plumed chief. He had to ride hard over the prairie to do it, and that a night chase of a red-skin on a dark horse is a fair test of man-hunter's craft, the reader may be assured. On overtaking him, an exchange of shots was immediate, the pseudo-Indian fell fatally wounded and Cody's horse was killed. On investigation, the confederate of Mr. Roy Velvet was found to be a red-washed white man. Furthermore, the victor recognized him as a former settler in the neighbourhood of the Cody farm, who had gone wrong through drink. In order to induce Cody to execute some little requests, he re-

vealed a staggering story of Mr. Velvet's real standing and intentions.

Velvet was by a wider known name one "Red" Reid, a kind of captain-general of half-breeds, renegade whites and lone Indians expelled from their tribes. All these bad spirits he joined at need to the highwaymen who infested mail-coach routes and emigrant trails, under the title of "road-agents," and to Indian bands. The white men commonly disguised themselves as Indians in their ventures in a force upon waggon trains. Velvet, therefore, was the very man most "wanted" by government detectives, since he had not forborne stopping army service trains; and by state officers of justice for his destruction of whole parties of emigrants.

On the next night Velvet had plotted to have the party under his charge attacked in camp, and everybody murdered.

Taking the dead outlaw's horse, Cody hastened to the camp in which Velvet had lodged his trustful dupes. Billy marched straight upon him and held him under fire whilst he was secured. If not so secured, he would have shot him at the instant to prevent

any possibility of the wily wretch's escape. When he was bound, the young man related his discovery to Captain Denham; in fifteen minutes the trial was over, and Reid the Renegade hanged up prominently, so that his allies might see that the king-pin had dropped out of the infernal machination. The attack took place, but the forewarned emigrants repelled it; sure enough, on searching the dead, several white men were found under the Indian colours.

The new chief guide, Cody, had the fortune to carry the train clean through. He would have been made sheriff of the new settlement if he had accepted office, but he was content with thanks and full pay, and returned home with a government train.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PONY EXPRESS.—SLADE "THE SLAYER."—QUICK WORK.—HOT WORK.—THE CLAUDE DUVAL OF THE WEST.—SAVING THE COACH.—LIGHTNING DRIVING.

"THE PONY EXPRESS" was an "institution" of the Mid United States which served its purpose and then so quickly vanished that its title hardly calls up more than the vaguest of memories. When California was peopled mainly by men from the Eastern seaboard cities, the means of their receiving home news and sending money to their families was a desideratum above ordinary pecuniary consideration. The mail route by steamship from New York to the Isthmus of Panama, crossed by mules before the railway was made, and thence to San Francisco through the Pacific, had no rival but the overland mail. This went from the Western cities such as St. Louis or St. Joseph over the

prairie, desert, and mountains, to the mining cities, mere camps and groups of sheds, of the Golden State. Passengers were carried in stage-coaches, specially constructed for roads which no European would have classed among highways; and these coaches carried mails as well as treasure. But merchants, and private individuals, with intelligence of importance to transmit, paid an extra fee in order to have their letters go by "Pony Express."

The letters were written on the finest of bank post, "onion-peel paper," and were carried by riders, from point to point relayed, across the uninhabited region. They went regularly, notwithstanding the weather; yet it is weather with such variations and such intensity that a meteorological bureau refuses the evidence of those who have experienced it. At Fort Benton, Montana, 60 degrees below zero has been recorded—Arctic winter, indeed—and in the Arid Belt the heat and dryness would parch a water-melon into a pea in an hour's exposure. Then there are rain and hailstorms and snowfalls, all prodigious phenomena of nature; landslides which leave a mountain bereft of a third of its altitude, sandstorms of a peculiarly cutting

kind, which wear away granite and basalt into honeycombed fretwork. The prairie fires break out spontaneously, as well as when accidentally started by emigrants who throw down pipe-lights in a five hundred acre square of tinder-like grass with the heedlessness of a city dweller in a paved street, or designedly by the savages to destroy budding fruit trees and ensure young grass for the game. And rattlesnakes that leap on horses and bite the rider; and insects that settle on him so that he enters the post-house like an apiarian on whom the bees have swarmed.

However, men were eager to do this, and the Express Company did not accept every applicant for office.

Buffalo Bill had found neither schooling nor farming to his taste, and after a trip to Atchison as assistant to Wild Bill, who ran a supply train from Leavenworth for the Overland Stage Company to the place before named, he volunteered as a pony express rider.

The waggon-train contractor, Russell, gave him a letter of introduction to the notorious Alf. Slade, the overseer and stage-coach agent for the Julesberg and Rocky Ridge Division of

the mail line. His head-quarters were forty miles out west from Fort Laramie, at Horseshoe, where Buffalo Billy found him and presented the letter.

Slade was a panther in human shape, who had killed a dozen men or so in rough-and-tumble fights, most of these encounters with fire-arms depending for success, bear in mind, on the excellence and condition of weapons and the extreme celerity in bringing them to bear on the enemy. A man not killed outright was popularly warranted in cherishing the vendetta, so that a mortal aim was generally taken or the fallen man would be finished on the spot. Otherwise a blundering murderer would soon have several recovered foes uniting to take his life. Slade was reckoned a very daring fellow, yet he died like a coward. But there is no consistency in the conduct of these Western desperadoes: they are capable of meannesses which are too despicable to record, and yet, at an emergency, have shone out like heroes—as witness the rough and tough "Bitter Root Bill," who fought the great fire which nearly destroyed the mining town, Old Helena City, Montana, twenty years ago. He stood on a

steaming roof, under which were the provisions and powder, without which the ruined miners would have been defenceless in the winter, keeping the blankets, which carpetted the roof, wet with water passed up by a chain of men, his form shrouded in smoke, and every now and then disappearing in a sheet of flame.

They are of the Rob Roy type, too good for banning, and not good enough to be unreservedly blessed.

Slade examined the volunteer critically, deemed him too young for the work which wore out great grown men rapidly, but finally took him on, since his "record" as "Buffalo Billy" was already current on the frontier.

Next day Billy was given a seventy mile trail, from Red Buttes on the North Platte River to Three Crossings on the Sweet Water, a very long track, but the young rider did not cavil. Before long, he came through "on time" so certainly that his reputation began to expand in this new line. All the rider was asked to do was to come through on time: if he delivered his mail-bag safely, it was little moment if he had bullets and arrows in him, or

if the horse he rode in was not the company's on which he had left the last station. More than one Eastern merchant has commented upon his advice from a San Francisco correspondent being contained in an envelope cleft through cleanly or red-stained, and has irritably condemned the company whose employés had dirty fingers and sharp thumb-nails: it was the stab of a bowie-knife and the red rust was a blood-drop from a postboy's heart, that is all.

One day when Billy stopped at the station to hand over his mail to the next man, he found him dead, killed in some private affair, and he volunteered to ride out his run—only five-and-eighty miles in addition to his accomplished seventy-five! Moreover, he got in ahead of "the scheduled time," and, thereupon, turning back, reached Red Buttes in due time. A ride without rest of three hundred and twenty odd miles, at an average of fifteen miles an hour! The company awarded him a purse of gold for this feat, and he was esteemed the "Boss," or foremost of their riders, a high recompense in fame after only a few months' riding.

The Indians, in their ideas about their

property in hunting grounds, particularly detest through routes of the white men's communication. The telegraph and railway follow the waggon roads and express messengers' tracks, and all conduce to preventing the great periodical migrations of game north and south. Hence the pony express service was always menaced by them, no matter what their tribe, and often were its riders attacked. They had little chance of escape except by running the gauntlet, as the Indians rarely fall on a fleet rider except when they can surround him with an overwhelming force.

A party of them had stormed a mail station and murdered the postmaster. They went into ambuscade at a little distance by Horse Creek. Thanks to a miracle, Bill Cody rode through them almost before he knew he was waylaid, and he little feared their chase until he observed that two of them were gaining on him, and dropping the others. A pony express rider is dressed as compactly as possible, and has nothing to divest himself of to lessen weight, so that all the young man could do was to use whip and spur on his horse. But the two reds had large horses such as are called

"Americans," in contradistinction to the undersized native mustangs, or ponies.

One of the twain soon forged ahead of the other, showing that his horse, a roan, was much superior to the second, for he was not forcing it. Meanwhile Cody's had become shaky, and as it would never do to fall with it, "the trouble" had to be settled at once. He stopped abruptly, wheeled, and fired with his ready revolver on this red man, who seemed by his feathers to be a chief. He was killed outright, before he could stir a finger. The horse threw him off, and Billy caught the rein. To mount and fly were an easy matter, but the mails on his saddle were dearer than life. He alighted and was hastily making the transfer, when the second savage dashed up and knocked off the rider's cap with a bullet.

The pony rider's two horses kept his hands full, but his own failing steed served him as a target to a second ball, which removed him out of his way. With two revolver shots, the second Indian received his quietus.

But now the other redskins appeared in view.

Cody cut the girths and took away his saddle

upon the roan, and raced thence before the shots could reach him. At the station, he did not find the shelter he expected, for the post-master had been killed, as already stated, and he had to keep on in flight. He arrived at no point of safety until Plontz Station, where he came in ahead of time—a troop of scalp-taking savages at one's rear forming the sharpest of goads!

The Indians continued to be annoying and were not always so unlucky as this time: they killed many riders and station-masters, running off the relay horses and burning the cabins. It is true, the guardians usually had tunnels to caves which they defended stubbornly, and their lives cost the enemy dear; but the company lost their buildings, stores, and horses all the same. Of course, the stage-coaches received their share of hostile attention, and the killing of passengers had a tendency to earn the line a bad name.

The white banditti were less injurious to the pony rider than the reds, as they only robbed the mail for valuables, and left the boy with his private property intact.

The most noted of the highwaymen in Cody's

time was a rogue with the distinguishing and quite Western gallantry of Claude Duval towards the fair sex. He always let a woman go free, and he was wiser still in serving poor men in the same way, for the penniless man usually is a tiger before he will let that which he hath not be taken away, so to say. This polite fellow had been nicknamed "the Cavalier" by some back-country journalist, who had seen some likeness in him—in his broad-brimmed felt hat, velvet breeches tucked into black leather boots, and rakish air—to the typical Prince Rupert.

As the pony riders, in return for their not being personally molested, commonly yielded to the Cavalier's searchings, he had believed this conduct a rule of the road without any exception. Bill Cody, however, proved the exception. He resisted when he was made to stand, and only delivered a bullet which disturbed the natural arrangement of flesh, bones and ligaments in the Claude Duval's arm. In reprisal his horse was shot. He was let pass, but warned that if he showed fight another time he would be killed.

For a period Cody eluded this gang, but then, when the road-agents all but despaired of

bringing him to a halt, he was no longer seen on the road, and the rumour ran that he had been taken off that division and put on elsewhere. As none of the boys cared to take his post, it being so ticklish a journey, there threatened to be a gap in the continuity of messengers. But, at the last moment, the daughter of one of the horse-watchers volunteered, probably on account of the Cavalier's fame for gallantry, and, the company gladly accepting the offer, she carried the mails until a man should present himself.

It was putting the Ladies' Highwayman to a costly and hazardous test, but he maintained his credit. On his gang halting the mounted Atalanta, he admired her appearance and her spirit, and assured her that she had the freedom of the road so far as he and his band were concerned. No doubt, he knew that the company would take advantage of his leniency and confide jewels and important bank-drafts to her, for he seemed to redouble his energy in stopping all the other riders and the coaches. The company had already offered a handsome reward for his apprehension, on conviction, but now they issued bills of veritable blood-money

—the augmented reward would be paid "dead or alive."

In the meanwhile the threatened man lived well, and even found time amid his business engagements and sprees in gambling hells of the nearest mushroom "cities," to carry on one of the strangest courtships on the tablets of history. He would often meet the girl pony-rider, and ride along with her at speed, making a circuit around the post-houses and rejoin her, after the change of horses, for some miles again. Whoever had seen the pair galloping on in the night, like Dick Turpin and Luke Rookwood, would have believed in a ghostly rider and Satan, or a guilty thing haunted by his victim's image.

The Cavalier acted up to his name; he could talk glibly, and he witched the female post-boy with eloquent speech as well as with noble horsemanship. At length the nocturnal rides and sweethearting culminated in a declaration —still on horseback, much like a scene of double-acting in the circus ring:—the Cavalier told her that he had learned to love her above any other of her sex, that he had his gains hidden in the mountains, and that he would

give up his evil career if she would share the rest of his life and the treasure he had wickedly earned. Still riding, but coyly reining in, the blushing horsewoman said it was so very sudden and unexpected, that she must speak to her papa, that she had never been in love before—and away she darted like the timid fawn which she appeared. Again the Cavalier met her, and, ever on the go, she confessed she had found out what her mamma would say, and they agreed, at the pace of a mile in two minutes, that their hearts beat as one, and that nothing but death should them part, and so on.

Settling down to business after this preliminary act of Cupid on Horseback, the two arranged to quit the country together. The female post-boy told of a night when she would have a quantity of "greenbacks" and other valuables quite portable in her charge, for the company's paymaster at one end of the route. The highwayman was to bring his choicest treasure, stolen jewelry and cash in his saddle-bags. He was also to have double relays of horses all along their road to Mexico, where they were to have a ranch, and live virtuously,

with occasional Apache scalp-hunting expeditions—the Mexican state government paying two hundred dollars a scalp—horse stealing and running off of cattle.

They met. Before starting on their final ride, which was to end at the hymeneal altar, the bride elect asked her beloved to alight and tighten her saddle-girths. In this case he did "buckle to," but only to feel the cold ring of a revolver mouth pressed to his forehead, and to hear :—

"You're my prisoner. Hands up. Resist and I shall kill you."

Meanwhile the bandit's horse had run a little way, but was checked with a jerk, for the thoughtful female post-boy had hooked the reins on her saddle.

The Cavalier had tried to believe it was all a joke—it was, but not with the aim he would have preferred. He had to give up his arms and march on before the strange young woman into the station, where a crowd was awaiting them. The faithless beauty was simply our friend Billy Cody in a riding habit ; he had no moustache yet, his complexion was no darker than many a frontier woman's, and, in the

saddle, as his height was much in the limbs, it did not appear.

The great road-agent was tried for his manifold crimes, and met his fate on the gallows.

This was a public service, and one to the company great enough to have won the young man a pension for retiring upon; but still he remained at pony riding, alone, frequently under fire, upon the seventy-five mile route, but unscathed as though he bore a charmed life.

One day he perceived the stage coach tearing along at full speed of its six horses, with nobody on the box. The driver had been shot dead by Indians, but still retained the reins in his cold hands where he had fallen on the foot-board. The same villains who had struck this blow, but forbore to follow it up, in order to catch the express rider in an ambush, in a canyon, or break in the level ground, now rode out after him. He had haply gone around this gully instead of through it, and had thereby saved his life, at least temporarily. But few assurance companies would have taken his as a "good" life at that juncture, for this was the situation. The stage coach was followed by three Indians, then came Billy, who was chased in turn by

upwards of a dozen of the red children of the plains.

Billy was upon a sorrel mare, good enough to bring him up within range of the hindmost of the three, whose pony he sent to death with a shot, and the rider went to grass with a violence that stunned him so he never moved. Another shot wounded one of the pair, so that they were frightened off. When Cody came up beside the coach, he found five terribly alarmed passengers therein, of which number two were women. They did not know what had happened to the driver, faithful in death.

Without stopping the coach-horses or his own, Billy scrambled upon the vehicle with his post-bags, and relieved the driver of the "lines," or reins.

He knew that a box of gold, in dust, "scales" and nuggets, was in the boot, and he meant to save this for the company.

Meanwhile, his horse, relieved of his weight, and trained, like all the express ponies, to keep the trail and run into the station (sometimes they have carried their insensible masters into the stable), ran onwards in advance.

Cody had learnt during his teamster experi-

ence to drive, even six horses, and it follows that he was perfectly able to manage the three-pair and coach. On the prairie, he maintained the lead, but on the rising ground of some hills, the Indians came up a-pace. The road was not merely bad, too, in places, but positively perilous. In road-making, the Americans leave a great deal for the skill and dexterity of drivers, with a margin for the luck which dare-devils often enjoy.

At the ridge the pursuers came near enough to fill the back of the coach with arrows, but here Cody plied the whip so briskly that the animals jumped away, and down the slope the whole concern flashed, swaying on the leather braces as if to fling out the passengers, who believed they had no choice but thus to be brained or by the redmen. "Lightning driving," though this might be accounted, there was no spill, no loss, no mishap whatever, and in half-an-hour the station was attained.

The company hereupon considered that Cody's driving was more valuable to them than his riding, and promoted him from the Pony Express saddle to the box of the Overland Mail coach.

CHAPTER XII.

OVERLAND STAGE-COACH DRIVING. — A TRAGIC AND A LUDICROUS ADVENTURE. — THE ROAD-AGENTS CONFOUNDED.

THE stage-coach drivers in the West and California were exceptional men; over and above ability as coachmen for three pair of horses, often badly or, at least, inadequately broken-in from the Wellerian point of view, they had to be provided with experience in all kinds of weather and Indian signs; cool; taciturn on business matters, since they were custodians of important treasures and notable citizens whose ransom would have enriched the Robin Hoods of the Rockies, and yet affable when they condescended from their altitude of dignity to chat with common mortals; replete with courage, "nerve," skill in using deadly weapons, and handiness in repairing damages to the harness and conveyance.

Among these rare charioteers the celebrated Ben Halliday whom "Mark Twain" has immortalised, was esteemed the king, but, from a daring drive, down a mountain side where road for even a cat-a-mountain there never had been, to elude an ambushed party of highwaymen, Bill Cody was called "the Prince of Reins."

These coachmen are such privileged beings that they play practical jokes on even high and distinguished "globe-trotters." Ben Halliday's upon Horace Greeley, the eccentric editor of the *New York Tribune* and once candidate for the Presidency of the United States, has gone the rounds of the English world's press. We give one of Bill Cody which shows to what an extent the Overland coachman carries a joke.

On one of his trips eastward he had a whole load of foreign tourists. They were mostly Frenchmen who were seeing the Wild West with the spectacles of M. Sardou in his "Uncle Sam," and their formidable letters of introduction had led so many officials to sprinkle rose-water on the skunks and pull the teeth and claws of so many grizzly bears that they were

inclined to be-little the unalterable horrors and dangers of the never-cultivated territories.

Cody had no sooner heard a specimen of their talk, in broken English, blaming everything American for all sorts of reasons, mostly contradictory, and comparing European scenery and personages to the depreciation of all before them that they deigned to remark upon, than he made up his mind to astonish them out of their fool's paradise at the earliest opportunity.

They began the battle by *sacré*-ing him, because they considered the average pace at which the vehicle was proceeding as excessively slow. They alluded to the *diligences* on the royal road making the better time, which, possibly, they did. For there is little resemblance between a macadamized highway and the Dead Mule Trail of Idaho, for example. When the allusions fined down to pointed reflections on the bad driver and the slow horses, Cody's back bristles began to arch up, so to say.

He was not the worst driver on that route, as we have led the reader to infer, and the horses in the present relay were wild ones only partially broken in for stage-coaching. When they were put to, Buffalo Billy had remarked to

the ostlers that he would show the foreigners what he knew about driving. When he had the mountain ride before him to descend, he let the horses race down. This was enough to make the frightened passengers believe him deranged, but when he took the lamps out of their sockets and smashed them in a throw at the leaders to accelerate the already terrific pace, they besought him to stop in the fear they would every one be killed. All the answer obtained was the strange one, very calmly spoken to come from a lunatic :

"Keep cool, gentlemen! sit still and see how bad drivers and slow horses stage it in the Rocky Mountains."

To conclude the scare, Bill fired off his revolver. At the station, the stablemen threw open the doors to the furious horses, who dashed in, tearing off the coach roof and scattering the luggage ; the passengers were all knocked about and bruised. Billy had ducked, like a bargee going under a low canal-bridge, and escaped untouched.

He went on with an empty coach, for the "Monsieurs" remained at the station hotel, to put down in their books of *Impressions de Voyage*

their mad drive down a mountain slope. The rough joke was laughed at by the injudicious, however much the other sort grieved; and however much, too, the perpetrator deserved censure, the company did not visit him with it.

As the "holding up" of a coach-load of passengers in the West differs in some features from the process of Italian brigands with their "*bocca à terra*—face to the earth!" which is not unfamiliar to European tourists, let us describe the American mode, as practised upon Buffalo Billy's charges. He had volunteered to drive over a very dangerous road where the highwaymen seemed the more daring and unscrupulous since the somewhat gentlemanly "Cavalier" had been removed from their captaincy.

On the first trip nothing occurred, but on the second, at a point where the vehicle had to proceed at a walking pace by reason of the difficulty of the way, three or four masked men jumped out of the brush, and levelling guns at the driver and passengers, ordered "Hands up!" At such a moment, eye-witnesses aver that the look point-blank into a shot-gun causes an aberration of vision, thanks to which the muzzle appears as large as the main drainage

pipe in a capital city, and awful horrors leer from its incalculable depths. At all events, the command is generally obeyed without a murmur, as upon this occasion, and so the next order for everybody to step out, still with the empty hands held in the air, to the roadside, where they form a line. One of the "agents" searches them methodically, whilst two overawe the file by flanking it and facing it at angles to enfilade it. Sometimes one or two obstinate fellows get out of the coach on the other side and convert it into a barrier, firing at the rogues under it, through the wheels, which does not add to the comfort of the more peaceably inclined who are among the banditti. We repeat, Billy allowed the operation to be carried out without even a verbal protest, very unlike him, and the robbers took away the gold-box and complimented him on being a "daisy." Border Chesterfields have not a word of heartier commendation in their energetic but limited vocabulary. Since Buffalo Billy, in spite of his exploit as regards the Cavalier and the plunge down the mountain-side, had relapsed into the category of coachmen who winked at the highwaymen's little eccentricities,

his comrades grew equally as obliging, and the profession of road-agent became a sinecure. The captains looked upon the line as a benefice, and, whilst one, who retired, received a bonus from his lieutenant and successor, another sent his daughter to learn to be a prima donna in Italy on the strength of his drawing so much a year on the Overland Stage Company.

Meanwhile, the corporation had heart enough to offer five thousand dollars for the capture of this band and its audacious leader.

Reward or no reward, the rascals continued the terror of the road until, one day, Bill Cody's coach left its station without one man having the temerity to travel by it; all the passengers were ladies, who perhaps expected the immunity for their sex enjoyed in the days of "the Cavalier."

At the common stopping-place of the brigands, they called the stage-coach to halt, and appeared with the usual summons. But, this time, there were no men to lift their unarmed hands.

"Women! why, what are they all?" queried the chief of the road agents; "schoolmistresses for the Lick Institute?"

"Ask them?" returned Billy, laconically.

When the half-a-dozen villains rode up to the stage door to hand out "the schoolma'ams," the coachman presented a revolver and began shooting with the signal cry:

"Out and at 'em, boys!"

It was but an expansion of his ruse with the Cavalier; the supposed women were stalwart fellows, well-armed, who killed or captured most of the ruffians; the captives were lynched, and so that gang was "rubbed out."

The reward was divided among the coachmen, Cody receiving the lion's share as the projector of the stratagem.

His coaching experience terminated in 1861 on his hearing of his mother's failing health, which sad news drew him straightway home.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT BEEF CONTRACT.—BUFFALO RUNNING.—OLD "BRIGHAM."—THE TRIAL AT MEAT-MAKING.—WILL COMSTOCK.

"THE buffalo is almost extinct," has said our hero; and he has borne an important part in the extermination, although, it must be added, he killed loyally like a true hunter. In the memory of living pioneers, the bison was to be seen in countless herds, anywhere—if a grass district—between the Yellowstone and the Red River of Texas. Too late there is a regret expressed that attempts are not made to domesticate a breed of cattle which might prove as useful to America as the East Indian buffalo to its country. The bulls are not as powerful as one of the domestic species run wild, and the cows are tractable and yield richer milk than almost any farmyard stock.

As long as the Indians and the comparatively

few white hunters slew them only for meat and hide, there seemed no diminution of their illimitable number; but, after the great Across the Continent Railways were commenced, and the demand for hide and bones could be met from this quarter, thanks to this same means of transport over iron rails, a different course of operations was planned.

The hunter became a mere slaughterer.

Supplied with the newest rifle, which kills at a thousand yards, he would approach a herd of grazing buffalo within easy range, perhaps half the extreme, or less. He fires at a cow and aims to put the bullet in just behind the fore shoulder, so that she will be some four or five minutes dying. The cow will usually be accompanied by her young, and the two-year-old calves, which curiously and surprisedly stand by her to the last, whilst a bull is very apt to parade round her, snorting defiance at the slayer, if not too stupid to understand it was an unnatural death.

The second shot is also at a cow, and the herd continue to stare confoundedly on the dead and dying, or keep on grazing.

After the cows, the calves are slain, and the

bulls last. They are the most difficult to kill from their wariness and the toughness of their coats. These are less in value than the cow's, although more than the calves', rating them thus: bullhide, one dollar eighty cents to two dollars; cowhide, three dollars twenty-five cents; and calfskin (two-year-old), one to one and a half dollars. Since the fashion—of English origin—to decorate dwelling-house halls, and dairyshops with buffalo horns mounted, these lead to poor "Mr. Bull" being in greater request.

The hunter has assistants who execute the cutting up, flaying, and carriage of the results to the nearest railway station, the whole being systematised with that attention to minutiæ to save time which characterises English manufacturing industries and American business enterprises of magnitude.

Their calm, almost noiseless, process of slaughter is diametrically opposed to the old-time buffalo hunt of Indians and white men.

These, mounted on ponies trained for the work, and often taking delight in it, as is asserted to be the case with decoy birds (on less sufficient evidence), assail a herd of buffalo

so as to start it on a run in panic. The buffalo ponies of the red men are classed apart from the war ponies, and treated even better than they are. Their perfection is attained when they will observe the double duty of approaching the buffalo and yet protecting the rider, for a buffalo has horns which, when not spoilt by his rooting up things, have enabled him to kill a grizzly bear. He will keep in a line with the foe, but converging with his insensibly, turning as he does, but ever creeping more closely until his master can get the fatal shot in. He appears to share his glee at the monster's fall, but he continues to run on after another, and so on, until dead beat.

A buffalo drive of this sort, but for the dust rising in volumes, would be a splendid sight from a mountain height or a balloon. There would be seen the fleet jackass rabbit flying before the unknown terror, other small deer in its train, and at length the foremost buffalo; then, the mass, huddled so that thousands move as one body. On the flanks, at the rear, ofttimes nipped up among the herd, like vessels in a closing ice-crack in the Polar seas, the mounted and plumed hunters, as maddened

with the fever of carnage as the beasts with that of dread. Under the thundering hoofs, the ground is levelled, sward cut up and pounded into an indefinable jelly, prairie-dog villages ground out of existence. The plain behind this living avalanche is seen brown or grey, dotted with the dead black corpses, and a few wolves sneaking about, afraid to touch the superabundance of ensanguined, palpitating flesh. Over all, the dust still afloat and a smell, *sui generis*, of oiled savages, the slaughter house, heated horses, upturned earth and hacked herbage.

If the line of flight force the wretched creatures into a natural trap—as a deep crack—so much the better; but, usually, the hunters content themselves with all the beasts their marksmanship and stock of ammunition enable them to bring down. As long as there is an arrow in the quiver (or in the left hand or girdle, more often) or a bullet in the pouch (in the mouth, again, more often), the slaying is kept up. After the excitement is over, the necessary operations of skinning and dressing and drying the meat are proceeded with. The extreme fatigue is paid for with a feast on the

choice portions of the buffalo, the tongue, hump, &c.

In the variation to the latter way, the hunter lightens his dress and his horse's caparisons to the least weight obtainable. He plunges into the fray with as much mastery of himself as possible, singling out the finest-conditioned head, wasting no balls, and, instead of keeping the frightened game on the run, executing the cowboy's device to check a stampede of cattle, namely "milling," or causing the outermost of the herd to go round and round in a circle, and so imprison the others in the centre, where they, too, catching the infection of vertigo, trace rings concentrically. This is, in miniature, the "buffalo surround" which a large number of Indians execute to keep the herd under command until enough have been killed to provide the winter's supply of animal food.

In the spring of 1867, William F. Cody received the offer of the Kansas Pacific Railroad Company to accept a supply of meat. It was for their platelayers along the line in building. The terms were so handsome (five hundred dollars a month), that Mr. Cody undertook it eagerly. He had married a Southern lady,

after a romantic courtship which will be related in a fitter place, and was father to a little girl, Arta, born at Leavenworth. The claims of family spurred him into carrying out this contract to the letter.

The railway company's labourers numbered over a thousand, and the air of the prairies sharpens the appetite, as if that of the Anglo-Saxon and Milesian navvy ever needed a whet! The amount of fresh meat required for their daily dinner-table was appalling, and besides, the Indians, always detesting the railway, were constantly warring against its advance and maintenance. Horse-thieves and other pirates of the prairies swarmed in the houses of refreshment, springing up and moving onwards with the army of workmen, and these would meddle with the meat-contractor until themselves made "meat" of.

Under this arrangement the buffalo of Western Kansas went down like fur and feather at a battue; in one season Bill's Garagantuan "bag" was of nearly five thousand head—to be accurate, four thousand eight hundred and twenty.

In spite of this being a feat never before approached, let alone equalled—and, for that

matter, never since paralleled—"Buffalo Bill," as he was more emphatically entitled, was challenged to compete in killing this animal with the shaggy mane. The challenger was the noted frontiersman described so fully and praised so highly by Gen. Custer in his articles in the *Galaxy Magazine* and in his subsequent book: Will Comstock.

The match was thoughtfully planned out, and numbers of spectators, ladies included, came out on the prairie on horseback to see who would win the five hundred dollars' stake and the title of Champion Buffalo Killer. There was at that time a perfect rage throughout the United States for championship matches—running, walking, spelling, pie-eating (!), and so on. The terms were that the contestants were to hunt, on horseback of course, during eight hours from a certain hour in the morning.

A herd having been found, the two hunters proceeded towards it at dawn, followed by the throng of spectators at a respectful distance; for the consent of the buffalo had not been obtained, and the sudden appearance of the bison in amid the distinguished guests might have been attended with more untoward incidents than

when Reynard doubles back and crosses the road under the carriage-wheels of the hunt visitors.

Comstock rode a fine, trained horse, and was armed with a repeating rifle often used in buffalo hunting. His opponent carried a Springfield rifle, "Lucretia," and rode his celebrated horse "Brigham," exceptionally well-trained for the work, as we shall see.

Brigham was the successor in the list of the Cody stud of the more noted "Buckskin Joe." It may be mentioned here that all horses with cream or tawny coats are called Buckskin, or simply Buck, the likeness to untanned deerskin being clear.

Equally confident of victory, both hunters dashed into a herd, followed by their well-mounted markers. The herd divided and left each to exhibit his skill without any fear of crossing shots.

There were three runs. In the first the score stood, Cody, 38, Comstock, 23; in the second, out of a smaller herd, 18, 14. After a rest corresponding to the luncheon hour at cricket matches, the settling round was acted out. For this, Cody, relying on Brigham, rode

him *bareback !* The final score stood, Cody, 13, Comstock, 9, which made the grand total to Cody, 69, and to Comstock, 46.

Cody's title to the championship in buffalo hunting has not since been disputed.

Comstock returned to his regular employment as an army guide, and escaped some dreadfully "close calls" in actions, only to die miserably in a trap laid by Indians—all the more puzzling to understand as he knew their character thoroughly.

The little episode which we touched upon in Cody's youth, of his riding a buffalo bull into camp with the herd at its tail, was repeated in 1868. He was the scout of a company of U.S. dragoons on the Solomon River, whose captain would not send out a waggon for game in prevision of its being killed. The hunter found a herd, headed it so as to turn it in the direction he desired, and drove it, like so many domestic cattle, into the military camp, where they were killed under the commander's own eyes. This, he acknowledged, was "self-delivering the fresh-killed meat."

One of Cody's friends, comrades and business associates, was Major Frank J. North. The

Major was a famous guide and Indian fighter. In the war on the plains with the savages, he rendered the Government inestimable services as chief of the Pawnee scouts. These hereditary foes of the Sioux were, naturally, of great utility, and their trustworthiness could be depended upon, as their fate would be worse than the soldiers' if they let themselves be captured.

Once when the Major and Buffalo Bill—who, with "Texas Jack," was a frequent *companyero* on hunts—came for prairie sport, the Pawnees objected that white men could not keep their tongues still on a hunt any more than squaws, and that the guest would only scare the game away. In order to show that he was good for something besides powwowing (chatter), Buffalo Bill killed forty-eight buffalo in thirty minutes, and became the Pawnees' brother.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WAR. — SCOUTING. — "THE LONGHAIRED SCOUT." — WHIPPING THE SIOUX SINGLE-HANDED.

THE war record of William F. Cody runs as follows :—1861, at frontier posts as scout-guide and message-bearer between military posts. 1862, scout and guide to the Ninth Kansas Cavalry in the Kiowa and Comanche Country, Arkansas, and Southern Missouri ; he was one of the legion of Kansas rangers, called from their Zouave breeches "the Red-legged Scouts." 1863, attached to the Seventh Kansas Cavalry, he went through the campaign in Tennessee, Missouri, and Mississippi, as well as Kansas, participating in several battles, notably that of Tupelo. He became a non-commissioned officer. 1866, with the celebrated Indian fighter, Gen. E. A. Carr ; it was a terrible winter, but Cody carried despatches

to and fro in dangerous tracts to the content of his officers. 1868, scout and guide to the chief corps in the great Indian war. 1869, marched with the famous "Fighting Fifth" Cavalry, and fought in the battles of Bearer Creek and Spring Creek. 1869, chief scout and guide to the Republican River Expedition against the Cheyennes, and in the pursuit along the Niobrara he nearly lost his life among the Sioux at Prairie Dog Creek in September; he was at Fort McPherson when the expedition disbanded. With the Fifth Cavalry again, he went on the Arizona expedition, and was distinguished for gallantry in the Red Willow and Birdwood Creek actions. 1876, with Gens. Miles and Carr in the Sioux War and the Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition. After the Great Civil War, Mr. Cody had been honourably discharged.

His personal adventures during the conflict were memorable, and, in one instance, was to have an important effect upon all his subsequent life. This was his romantically-made acquaintance with his wife of the future.

Of this two accounts exist. Colonel Judson, in a *mélange* of fact and fiction, relates a rescue

by Buffalo Bill of a young lady in the streets of St. Louis from a crew of Federal soldiers, intoxicated by the vile liquor considered good enough for the army.

The other account,—one, we believe, better to be depended upon,—comes from the pen of Colonel Ingraham. We quote his narration:—

"In the second year of the war, Cody became one of the famous 'Red Legged Scouts,' formed of the most noted rangers of Kansas. He was sent to guide a train to Denver, but upon arriving there, learning of the severe illness of his mother, he at once set off for home, going the entire distance alone and making wonderful time through a country infested with dangers. To his joy, he found his mother still living, yet failing rapidly, and soon after his arrival she breathed her last, and he had lost his best, truest friend, and the sad event cast a gloom over the life of the young soldier. (1862.)

"As one of his sisters had married some time before, her husband took charge of the farm, while Cody returned to the army and was sent into Mississippi and Tennessee with his command. But he did not relish military duty, for

he had become too well accustomed to the free life of the plains, and, resigning his position as scout, started upon his return to the prairies.

"While on the way he came in sight of a pleasant farm-house, from which rose a cry for help in the voice of a woman.

"Cody saw five horses fastened to a fence on the other side of the house; but this array of numbers did not deter him when a woman called for aid, and dismounting quickly, he bounded upon the piazza, and was just running into the door when a man came out into the hall and fired at him, but fortunately missed him. Bill instantly returned the fire, and his quick, unerring aim sent a bullet into the man's brain.

"At the shots a wilder cry came from within for help, and two men dashed out into the hall, and, seeing Bill, three pistols flashed together. But Cody was unhurt, and one of his foes fell dead, while springing upon the other he gave him a stunning blow with his revolver that put him out of the fight, and then bounded into the room to discover an elderly lady and a lovely young girl threatened by two huge ruffians, who were holding their pistols to their heads to try

and force from them the secret of the hiding-place of their money and valuables.

"Seeing Bill, they both turned upon him, and a fierce fight ensued, which quickly ended in the killing of both ruffians by the brave young soldier, who seemed to bear a charmed life, for he was unhurt, though he had slain four men in a desperate combat and wounded a fifth.

"Just then into the room dashed three men, and their weapons were levelled at Buffalo Bill, and right then and there his days would have ended had it not been for the courage and presence of mind of the lovely young girl, who threw herself forward, to the youth's great surprise, and cried out:

"'Father! Brothers! don't fire, for this man is our friend.'

"The old man and his sons quickly lowered their rifles, while the former said:

"'A friend in blue uniform, while we wear the grey?'

(The respective uniforms of the Federal and Confederate armies, were blue and grey.)

"'I am a Union soldier, sir, I admit, and I was going by your home, heard a cry for help,

and found your wife and daughter, as I suppose them to be, at the mercy of five ruffians, and I was fortunate enough to serve them. But I will not be made prisoner, gentlemen.'

"Bill's hands were on his revolvers and he looked squarely in the faces of those in his front, and they could see that he was a man who meant what he said.

"'My dear sir, I am a Confederate, I admit, and this is my home; but I am not the one to do a mean action toward a Union soldier, and especially one who has just served me so well in killing these men, whom I recognize as jay-hawkers, who prey on either side, and own no allegiance to North or South. Here is my hand, sir, and I will protect you while in our lines.'

"Cody grasped the hand of the farmer, and then those of his sons, and all thanked him warmly for the service he had done them."

The farmer, Frederici, was captain of local volunteers. This meeting decided Cody to remain in the army, as its head-quarters were at St. Louis, wherefrom he could often call upon the young lady. Before the war ended,

he went back to Kansas, it was true ; but before he was twenty-one, albeit a man to all appearance and quite so by actions, he returned to his affianced. They were married at Farmer Frederici's, and the happy pair went to Leavenworth, where the bride was left with her new sisters on the Cody farm.

The Benedict resumed government service, but in the comparatively independent post of scout.

Having in mind that the scout of an army corps in Indian territory carries the safety of all even more fully in the hollow of his hand than the commanding officer himself, it will strike with surprise that such a trust should be given to a young man just of age. But the imperatively exacted conditions are in rare men, and age has little to do with it. One of the finest scouts of Gen. Sherman's celebrated detached army, which executed the March to the Sea, that is to say, across half the continent in the rear of the northern Confederate lines to the Atlantic, was a boy in his teens. This young hero, "Charlie" Campbell, was but *fourteen* when he was regularly appointed a scout. He was a friend of "Texas Jack," a man who did

not associate with braggarts and incompetent fledglings.

The scout for an army on the Indians' roving ground has the more difficult part to play that the soldiers cannot move with the savage's celerity, and, under the best of circumstances, are so overburdened with caparisons and the paraphernalia judged compulsory for the officers' comfort, that their presence is long signalled from afar upon the plains and in the mountains. The scout, therefore, never expects anything but a miracle to keep his column's advance long a secret, and has to redouble his precautions and overcome the military man's training towards methodical slowness to take the alert enemy by surprise. "California Joe" guided Gen. Custer's column of cavalry along a mountain ridge in the depth of winter in order to surround and overwhelm a village of Indians and accredit that officer with the victory of the Wichita River. This was done, for the last stage, in the night-time. Think of the wondrous knowledge of every rod of the ground—ground rocky, wooded, channelled with torrents and smothered in snow—required to lead a troop of regular cavalry in darkness to a given

point in the wilderness, absolutely untracked by men.

The scout, moreover, must always succeed. He is in honour bound never to surrender. If there be two or more, one is to carry the intelligence to the main body, whilst the others delay the pursuers even at the cost of life. Brother is to quit brother, father is to abandon sons, lest, for the point of affection or fraternity, the army be destroyed.

Bill Cody's tripartite experience as an Indian-fighter, marksman, and rider, made him almost faultless from the outset.

Whilst attached to Fort Hayes, Cody the scout heard the colonel commanding regret the inability to make a raid on certain Indians whose outrages deserved punishment, from the non-arrival of a drove of government horses.

Cody voluntered to go and learn about them, and hurry on the drovers, if they were to blame. But not far from the fort, he struck upon a plain trail: many hoofmarks, the rut made by the lodge-poles dragging after ponies, and scraps of warriors' finery; an Indian village of some importance was on the move.

Most men would have gone on about their

business; but Buffalo Bill conceived a grand and daring idea—foolhardy, indeed, to any save one who was a host in himself. He followed the trail till dusk, when he saw the tribe camped at the head of a valley. At the other end was a group of sentinels. Between them, in the bottomland, the large drove of horses were resting and cropping the evening meal.

Cody was riding Brigham, the horse that won him the buffalo-killing match, and he knew he could be trusted not to whinny or neigh at being left alone. He went around to the least defended mouth of the vale.

There he dismounted and prepared to master the four watchmen by subtlety and strength; not a shot ought to be fired on either side or the whole design would miscarry.

He had the materials for disguising himself as an Indian, and he hastily painted up and befeathered himself. He secreted his horse in a dip of the ground and stole through the under-brush to the valley-head for a final examination.

The four sentries had picketted their ponies together, but they were not to be espied, so cunningly were they concealed; probably re-

clining in the grass. The white man made a short circuit so as to get down into the valley within the line of the look-outs, and deliberately walked towards them.

Presently he saw a head on a level with the herbage. Although the man did not rise altogether, naturally taking the new-comer for a chief, coming evidently from the camp to give an order, Cody addressed him in his own tongue in order to lull suspicion until he got within arm's reach and then grasped him. He strangled him, and dropped him under his own blanket.

The next man was called to him and was stabbed to the death ; so fared the other two, although the last was the most powerful, and gave the ultimate victor, somewhat exhausted, a terrible wrestling for the crowning triumph.

What nerved the scout was the perfect consciousness that the bands intended a massacre along the border.

Meanwhile the five hundred warriors were dreaming of the carnage he was determined on averting.

Cody returned to his horse, mounted, rode down into the valley between the camp and the

horses, and started them towards the unguarded mouth of the valley. Horses soon fall in with the mass, and, once they were out upon the prairie, the pace was quickened, and they were "stampeded" almost as far as the fort in the night. Leaving them in a good pasture to recuperate, Cody went on to the fort, and besides reporting his important capture, suggested their being used to attack the Indians.

So those cavalry men who were awaiting mounts, went out along with their fully provided comrades and put their harness on the Indian ponies. The three parties of a hundred riders marched off to the camp, whilst the other horses were taken to the fort stables.

During this morning's work the Sioux had, of course, discovered the removal of their sentinels by death and of their horses by an unknown hand, and were on the back track, acknowledging their *coup* of attack on the settlements was a failure. But the cavalry overtook and beat them, and forced them to sue for mercy.

Ever after this single-handed feat, the Indians designated Bill Cody *Pa-e-has-ka*, which, being interpreted, signifies *the Longhair* (*-ed Scout*).

As we have already alluded to the frequent practice of white men, hourly the opponents of Indians, wearing their hair uncut with a view of taunting them to scalp them if they can, the distinction in this epithet is not apparent, unless that, by emphasis, Cody was held up as *the* Long-haired Scout by pre-eminence.

In any case, the Indians hated him with additional fervency, and spared no pains to kill or capture him.

Once a number of army officers, impatient beyond prudence, would not go from one to another fort by the slow but well-escorted waggon-train. To make their rashness the greater, they had their wives, equally bent on making the trip, as a terrible augmentation of the bait to the savages. It is not in these pages that can be repeated the awful tale of the few white ladies who have been forced to be the consort of a chief and finally cast off to be the butt of the Indian women. English readers will remember the parallel fate of daughters of a high officer in India who were put in the harem of some native prince after the Mutiny, and felt themselves so degraded that, in the following years, when they allowed the news of

their still living to reach their relatives, they urged all hope to be abandoned of their ever being seen in their old home again.

Bill Cody was engaged to guide this tempting party, a dozen strong, and it started, after he had conscientiously showed them the dangers they braved, and, no doubt, privately informed the officers that, in case of the Indians seeming fair to capture them, they must kill their wives, even if they had not the fortitude to kill themselves, with the shot reserved by all army officers on the frontier to prevent the inevitable torture.

As was fully expected by the guide, the Indians appeared. Two hundred of them chased the twelve. The guide could not appease the legitimate alarm, and did not increase the bitterness of the self-reproaches at their having left the fort without a fit escort. He simply directed the well-mounted party to ride away steadily together in the direction he indicated. He would cover the rear. They left him, still, on his horse Brigham, which never winced as the savages came riding down upon the solitary horseman with many a yell and whoop.

The Indians have the same pity and respect for a madman that the Irish and Bretons show for an idiot, an *innocent;* they slackened pace somewhat as they neared this statuesque man and rider in the way. Suddenly Cody lifted his rifle, a sixteen-shot Winchester. The Express rifle is preferred by English hunters in the West, but the Winchester has succeeded the Sharpe's in the favour of those American backwoodsmen who have resigned the muzzle-loading Kentucky rifle for the latest magazine guns.

Sixteen shots from the repeater into that serried cavalry made them halt with sixteen dead men or horses; and thereupon Buffalo Bill rode after his charges, reloading on the way. This act was repeated before the Indians fully understood this novelty of a rifle that shot many times like a revolver, and gave up the costly chase. They could not be expected to ride up against an instrument that "pumped out" fire and death.

CHAPTER XV.

SCOUTING.—"CODY'S RIDE."—THE EXASPERATING MULE.—BUCKSKIN JOE'S LAST GALLOP.—THE DUEL WITH YELLOW HAND.

BOTH Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill were scouts to General E. A. Carr, famous as an Indian fighter. His brother-general, Penrose, managed to send word of his being surrounded by Cheyenne Indians under command of a noted chief, Black Kettle, near the Cimarron River. This is an important branch of the Arkansas River, and running between it and the Canadian River. The whole region is troubled. The Atlantic and Pacific Railroad intersects it east and west. There are several Indian reservations, daily invaded by unscrupulous white men; there are negro settlements, and an army of squatters in Oklahoma were in equal enmity against the red men, whose guaranteed land they usurped, and the U.S. Government

officials and troops who were trying to protect the Indians on the soil they considered theirs under a sacred treaty. The Cheyennes (*Chiens*, or Dogs) had left their reservation farther west and were on the war-path. They had surrounded General Penrose, and expected to force a surrender by famine, whereupon they would have murdered every one. As the red men grow less and less in number, they become the more convinced that extermination is the word of order against them, despite seeming good faith. They submit, but only to main force, and no longer believe any promises made them.

Something like unity for the great end of meeting the paleface with "the larger battalions," now and then is an idea perceived by them. As the Northern nations were collected by Tecumseh, so the Sioux and allies were by Sitting Bull.

In this case, the Cheyennes had overwhelmed General Penrose. For "generals," on the border, usually read "colonels," for the U.S. army is so small, that often a general in rank has but a thousand men to follow his orders.

The Cheyennes were pursuing their tradi-

tional tactics. They covered the ground all about the besieged, wearied and worried them with sharp-shooting, drove back all couriers, and picked off stragglers. The more to daunt them, they held mysterious councils, betrayed by howls and yells, which the Indian experts interpreted as rejoicing over the torment of a captive, or the applause at some new and delightful project of the same sort to be carried out when the troops were captured. The latter had come to extremities : the last of the meat was going, that of the draught oxen. After this, the horses must follow, and dismounted dragoons retreating are fearfully at the mercy of mounted plain Indians. Good judges reckon them the finest light cavalry in the world, even when the Cossacks and Circassians of the Russian Imperial Guard are taken into consideration.

At this juncture, when the Cheyennes would soon have charged upon the enfeebled regiment, the blessed succour, long given up as hopelessly expected, arrived. The surprised Indians retired in disorder, but were overtaken at the river. One charge routed them where the water had made them stand, and here Wild

Bill galloped into the band, overtook Black Kettle, and stabbed him to death in the very heart of his body-guard. On turning, he found fifty of them around about him; long odds, although a man has a revolver in each hand. But his comrade, Buffalo Bill, had seen his strait.

He, too, charged the throng with a revolver in each fist, and having joined his companion, and, by his in-rush, left a gap, the redoubtable pair rode out by it, knee to knee, "shooting their way" clean through.

This was a feat of horsemanship, sure and rapid small-arm firing and cool courage which was fitly appreciated by the famous "Fighting Fifth" cavalry, which were the lookers-on.

It was with this regiment that our scout was principally engaged. He fought in its van against Sioux as well as against Cheyennes. In 1868, in the autumn, he was with it at Fort Hayes, Kansas, under command of Gen. Phil. Sheridan, the Murat of the Federal cavalry in the Civil War.

"Sheridan's Ride" is poetised for posterity, but Buffalo Bill's ride, equally as meet for

rhyme, remains unwritten, although remembered in the West.

All that year the Indians were "bad." The woods and plains swarmed with them.

Nevertheless, Buffalo Bill safely executed a ride with despatches from Gen. Sheridan to Fort Larned, sixty-five miles. Here Gen. Hazen was awaiting to go to Fort Sarah, thirty miles off, and gladly availed himself of the guidance of one so brave, trusty, and well acquainted with the difficult and dangerous country.

Their task safely accomplished, Cody returned all alone, or at least was half way, when he was stopped by some forty or fifty Kiowas, who "prevailed" on him to accompany them to their chief, Santanta, a noted and white-man-hating leader, at Pawnee Rock.

To most men the noted scout would seem to be unhappily placed; but, fortunately, he remembered General Hazen, in their long chat on the road, remarking on the uncommonly simple and impudent request of this chief, whilst on the war-path, for beef to feed his braves. It must be acknowledged that a military officer is often placed on the horns of the dilemma of

being censured for aiding the hostile Indians with supplies, or for refusing them that without which they would have to go home famishing, or raid on the settlers' herds and flocks.

In consequence of this hint, Buffalo Bill represented himself as the herald of the cattle which he stated the great white chief was only too delighted to furnish his great red brother (like star tragedians, all captains of tens and captains of twenties are "great" on the border). Cody was ready to bring him the "big heap (many) *whoa-haws*" now that he had "found" the chief. "Whoa-haws" is a somewhat humorous Indian name for tame cattle, founded on the frequency of the cry among herdsmen.

The envoy, of course, could be no longer held as a prisoner. On the contrary, his weapons and his mule were restored to him. As the American mule is often a magnificent animal, some fifteen or even sixteen hands high as compared with the mustangs of under fourteen, the guides and scouts ofttimes use them on long arduous journeys. But the astute chieftain imposed a guard of honour upon the harbinger.

Naturally Cody only awaited a chance to break away from these dozen redskins, and did so, being chased up to a few miles of Fort Larned, both firing at one another as well as the pace permitted. At Pawnee Fork the fugitive had to swim the stream, and the pursuers gained at this point. On the other hand, Cody met a soldier and a scout in the woods, who were driving a waggon in to the fort. The three drew up and checked the savages with a volley, killing two, and the rest returned to the hungry Santanta without any "meat," beef or human.

This clever deception and the losses of warriors were a double injury which the chief determined, and was indeed bound by Indian honour, to avenge. He sent the fiery cross around to detached parties and allies, and came up, six hundred strong, to besiege the garrison even before the cheers over Cody for this successful stratagem had died away. The news of their investment should be reported to the commanding general, Sheridan, without delay, but nobody cared to risk an almost certain and horrible death at the hands of the exasperated savages.

Another principal scout, although not a coward, but having become imbued with the aborigines' own opinion about foolhardiness was "reluctant to risk himself," to use the words of Gen. Carr, who does not blame him. These men will take desperate chances, and will try to creep through a knot-hole, but here was an almost total absence, we say, of likelihood of piercing the red men's lines.

At this nick, Cody quietly offered himself. Thus was he always ready to go on such errands of life and death, in the darkest night or the worst weather, although knowing how much the emergency required of man. The autumn was becoming a terrible winter of snow, rain and sleet.

The best horse was given the volunteer, and at the dead of night and the height of a storm, when the ill-clad Indians might be most expected to be under cover and relaxing vigilance, he rode out of the beleaguered fort. Much better sentinels than their masters, the half-wild dogs which, in fact, often associate with wolves and can hardly be distinguished from them in size, colour, look, and sharpness of scent and sight, were on the look out. Cody rode upon

one, and the whole siege force were aroused; he was prettily peppered, but managed to get through and delivered his message at daylight. He had earned and enjoyed two hours' sleep, when he returned to report himself for duty. At that moment Gen. Sheridan was offering five hundred dollars (one hundred pounds) for a courier to take the news and necessary orders on to Fort Dodge, nearly a hundred miles beyond. Three couriers, not to mention several settlers, had already met their death at the hands of the savages, who seemed to be shooting up all over the land.

"Some one must go!" added the officer, who had never spared himself in action, and was surprised to find no taker of his offer.

But falling into the power of the chivalric Gen. Lee's soldiery and into that of the pitiless Kiowas and Cheyennes and Sioux, are very different fates. Anyway, Cody modestly said that he would go unless a better man turned up before four o'clock in the afternoon. He fully intended to repose in the meantime, much needing so to do, as is apparent; but he had reckoned without his hosts, for in true Western hospitality, his friends would banquet him. He may

have been regaled but scarcely refreshed when the time came for him, since nobody had offered to pluck bright honour, to get in the saddle again. At seventy-five miles he changed horses, and accomplished the whole ninety-five by reaching Fort Dodge at ten in the morning.

The Indians were still so thick and alert about the garrison that his arrival startled as a miracle. During the last three days a message by the commander had been vainly awaiting a carrier.

However, Cody wanted to get back to Gen. Hazen's, and undertook the almost fatal errand.

On a government mule, the best animal available, he set out on the now familiar road at sunset.

When sixty miles east, this "amoosin' cuss" exhibited the perversity of the hybrid by running away when his rider had alighted to freshen up at a spring, and started off, on the trail to the fort, luckily. For over thirty miles the "critter," a monster of perversity, led the way for the foot-passenger just out of range. Then, in an unlucky moment, it allowed the infuriated horseman to vent the accumulated bile, and still his playfulness for ever with a

bullet. The courier made his appearance at the fort with the harness on his back.

Gen. Hazen was fretting at the lack of a messenger to Gen. Sheridan, and when Cody had some rest, he actually accepted this continuance of his task, however truly this seemed contravening our ancient saw, "Never ride a willing horse to death."

Nevertheless, Buffalo Bill went forward and achieved the most extensive despatch-bearing feat ever known; in fifty-eight hours in the saddle, he had gone three hundred and fifty-five miles, an average of six miles an hour, without referring to the mule-pilotted stroll of thirty-five miles! Gen. Sheridan was all the more astounded, as, having acquired fame as an equestrian, he better valued the ride than other officers.

It was Sheridan who appointed W. F. Cody chief of the government scouts, a high post which ranked him among the general officers.

Still attached to the Fifth Cavalry, although in this exalted capacity, he accompanied them from Colorado to Fort McPherson, Nebraska. On the march there was a severe action with the Indians at Bearer Creek.

His horse was well-known in the West as "Buckskin Joe." The adjective is often applied to men as well as horses, but for a different reason; the "buckskin" horse is one of an Isabella or dirty yellow hue, like the orange horse on which the Chevalier d'Artagnan began his adventures in "The Three Musketeers." The "Buckskin Sam" of Indian stories is merely a hunter clad in deerskin clothes.

"Buckskin Joe" was a very intelligent and highly-trained horse. In dangerous expeditions he would be reserved by his master riding another and leading him. He could even be left to follow like a dog. He could and would thrust his head into his bridle to facilitate being bridled and bitted, on an emergency. Add that he was fleet, staunch and fearless, and you have a steed worthy of a page of praise.

In his duty of post-guide at Fort McPherson, Bill had a despatch to Gen. Carr, when a troop of Indians, a hundred in number, dashed out upon him and began a chase of all but two hundred miles. Old Joe had never been so "extended," albeit he had saved his master's head by his heels more than once before. By

degrees he "dropped" his pursuers until only a dozen were at his tracks in the last fifty miles, and all were pumped out when the stars and stripes on the fort flagpole met the relieved rider's eyes. The poor horse went blind from the strain, and was placed for the well-deserved repose on the Cody farm on the North Platte River. Here he died of old age in 1882.

The army reports mention Chief of Scouts Cody's name for valour in an expedition in 1869, on the Republican River. He was the leader in the pursuit of Tall Bull, a Cheyenne chief of note, with his Dog Soldiers, or select desperadoes and bandits, who were brought to bay and whipped in Colorado, at Summit Springs; it was his guiding the Fifth Cavalry into a position whence their charge was decisive, which gave the blue-coats the victory. There was still another pursuit along the Niobrara River, for after the Indians in a body are once broken, their detachments must be kept on the run, or they will, in pursuance of orthodox savage tactics, split up still more, but all the little bands proceeding to rally at a prearranged spot. On the 26th of September, this same year, he was surrounded by his old foe-

men the Sioux at Prairie Dog Creek, and narrowly escaped being offered up in propitiation of the unavenged *manes* of their brethren, "gone over the range." The Indians of the plains poetically place their heaven on an imaginary and illimitable tableland extending westward from the crest of the Rocky Mountains. When the rising sun gilds that ridge, they deserve, with their snowy crowns and icy diamonds, the native name of "Shining Mountains."

He followed the flag of this same cavalry regiment into Arizona, where he participated gloriously in several fights. Besides General Carr, he was associated with Generals Crook and Terry, both likewise having the reputation of men who fight the Indians on horses, and not in ambulance waggons—a scout's distinction between the go-ahead combatants and the old school of military men who tried to fight the redskins with military academy tactics.

When Gen. Sheridan had the important charge of the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia on his hands, and that prince was being shown the wild western scenes and *fauna*, he could choose no more reliable "guide and initiator"

into the way to kill buffalo scientifically than Chief Scout Cody. This was at the end of 1871. The buffalo hunt was stage-managed, to use the expression, by Mr. Cody, and went off to the Muscovite's satisfaction. There is always a theatrical element in the hunts given a royal or imperial sportsman.

Cody it is, who, above all other guides, has been chosen by Old World sightseers and hunters, in the region where a host of savages, as blind to crowns and garters as the Zulus, may at any moment descend on a pleasure-party and make a *battue* of dukes and barons. He piloted in the canyons and over the prairie many noble shikarrees, who have highly praised him in their travel-books, as far as they have been authors. We may name Sir George Gore, the Irish sportsman who hunted the West like an independent trapper, living in a hunting-box, and was met in perilous places by surprised wanderers, who little suspected in their republican simplicity that one of the "Britishers' peerage" was before them; another "Earl and the Doctor"—Lord Dunraven and Dr. Kingsley, the former's testimony being that Cody showed eyesight that could be depended upon like a good field-glass

(General Carr went further and said "his eyesight is *better* than a good field-glass,") "he is a wonderful judge of distance, always ready to tell how far it was to water;" and General Custer, and other Americans of position whose life lost by an error or even an unforeseeable mishap, would have ruined a career.

Custer, with his winning and romantic manner, had exercised his usual spell over Cody, and the latter was deeply affected, like all the General's brothers-in-arms, when the news came of his having been defeated and massacred—the entire command—by Sitting Bull, a Sioux chief who had massed the best warriors of his own and allied tribes, on the Little Big Horn River, 1876.

The war had been in hot progress previous to this event, and Buffalo Bill, after a peaceful retirement, had joined his old comrades of the Fifth Cavalry, who dashed into the conflict with this addition as an augury of ultimate success.

There was a grand concentration of all available troops towards the recent battlefields, for General Reno had been surrounded at the same time as General Custer, and an Indian victory on a large scale over an army corps is of im-

measurable loss of the military's effect on red men of all kinds. The news is always spread by Indian runners from the victors, who take care to add to it a florid promise of greater spoil in case their ranks are increased by the receivers. They mention all the tribes of which representatives fell, in order to appeal to the blood-feud.

The Fifth were scouting at haphazard along the South Cheyenne River and to the Black Hills, driving straggling Indians before them who had not had time to join the great union, when the news of Custer's defeat was brought them.

General Merritt was in command, *vice* General Carr. He at once ordered a march into the Big Horn country, incredible as the news was that a general so experienced as Custer should have let himself be "wiped out." There are those who believe that the dashing officer was more reckless than usual from his private resentment at having been shelved till lately by the head officials of the War Department.

Be that as it may, General Merritt had barely started when he heard that five hundred or more Cheyennes, being inflamed by Sitting

Bull's victory, had renounced the path of peace and were on the way to join him. It was imperatively necessary that all attempts should be made to prevent this reinforcement reaching him, and, besides, their punishment would check similar ebullitions among the redskins who were still quiet to all appearance about the agencies.

Picked men to the number of five hundred were instantly started off so as to converge towards the calculated route of these blood-thirsty braves, and Cody was their scout.

On the 17th of July (1876), Buffalo Bill was on the scout for this troop, a couple of miles ahead. Instead of his Winchester rifle, he had an Evans, with thirty-four shots, a magnificent and almost unique instrument of death. This, to so perfect a marksman, made him no mean enemy, although alone. He discovered the mass of Indians, more in number than the Indian agent had reported them when they began their march. But, at the same time, he descried two white men on horseback whom he divined to be despatch-bearers, very likely for his own general. They were on the right course fairly, but were unaware that the Cheyennes were coming in between them and

the regular horse. As soon as the Cheyennes perceived the two, whilst Buffalo Bill remained unperceived, a squad of thirty reds were sent out to capture them.

On the instant Cody conceived and put into execution a plan as bold as ever amazed the savages.

He rode over the rising ground concealing him heretofore from the enemy, and directly towards the detachment aiming to take the two despatch-bearers. The thirty drew rein at once, expecting the scout must be the head of a company to be so venturesome, but as a glance convinced them he was alone, they whooped and started again to envelop him in the cordon.

But, on coming within range, he opened fire on them with the almost inexhaustible magazine-rifle. The fire was returned, notwithstanding the amazement of the redskins; but this was all for the better, as, for one party, the two messengers were warned that danger was in that direction, and, for another, the regular troops also heard it, and as in these skirmishes soldiers always move to the firing, they would be hastily coming up.

Meanwhile, having checked the squad by the loss of two or three men and more ponies, Bill wheeled off to the top of a hill, signalled the scouts that he was a friend and they were to follow him if they would save their hair, and rode for the column at full speed.

The Cheyennes, puzzled how they had been forestalled, halted and formed their line of battle, for their conduct in leaving an agency and their reservation under all arms was inexcusable, and they resolved to fight, on the principle of being hanged as well for a lamb as a sheep.

The usual reconnoitring began on both sides, for, in these fights, both parties keep under cover as much as possible, although the regular cavalry try to manœuvre for charges in column as they are trained to make. The Cheyennes became emboldened by the discovery that "the police of the plains" were but half their original force, augmented since their departure.

The van of each side were in view of one another when Cody volunteered to go out and get the latest information of the disposal of the enemy.

Against him two chiefs advanced, one named

Yellow Hand, and the other Red Knife, son of one Cut Nose, a famous chief. These were not despicable antagonists although young.

Yellow Hand had the start of his comrade, and recognized the white when within a hundred yards of him. Taciturn as an Indian is, he is loquacious enough when going into action, and freely taunts an opponent and indulges in gestures, such as the Shakesperian biting a fig or thumb, wherever the American native learnt that trick.

"Halloa! Pa-e-has-ka!" he shouted. "You see I know you! the very man I want to fight and show the scalp of!"

The borderman does not indulge in the powers of rhetoric with which the son of the forest is credited, but replies with language more forcibly arabesque.

Bill had orders from his general not to expose his valuable life, but it was not in the nature of a white man to be challenged and evade the contest. Under the eyes of the soldiers and of the red men, he charged Yellow Hand, who galloped to meet him the sooner.

At their exchange of shots, the savage's rifle and the other's revolver killed each the oppo-

nent's horse. This would have equalised matters, but the chief was caught by one leg under the pony, and Cody had fallen clear. As he ran up to the other to pistol him dead, the red man got free and they fired at the same time, both with revolvers. Of late years, the chiefs spare no expense to obtain the most modern arms of precision.

Both were slightly wounded.

The next moment the two closed in a hand-to-hand knife fight. As usual, between men accustomed to wielding steel, the play was short; the bowie overcame "the scalper." Yellow Hand was struck down by a stab in the breast, and, knowing the effect on both sides of what would be taken as an omen, Buffalo Bill excitedly tore off the chief's war-headdress of feathers, and brandished it over his head and the dying wretch under his boot.

"Hurrah! the first scalp in revenge of Custer!" was his cry.

The cheer of the soldiers was followed by a warning cry from the same quarter. During this encounter, though brief, the second Indian had come up and hoped to ride down our hero before he could recover from that death-

grapple. Bill looked up in time, and with another revolver-shot flung Red Knife off the horse, dead at his feet.

With their most frenzied yells at this double loss, the Cheyennes rushed at the lone hunter who had braved them so insolently. It was plainly a race between the two bodies of cavalry: if they came into collision on the wrong side of the scout, he would have been crushed under the war-ponies. Happily the shock was before him, the regulars having charged rapidly.

After the meeting, the Cheyennes receded, and their flight became a rout, so that the remnant slunk back to the Agency, "whipped so that it would take four of them to cast a shadow." This action was called the Battle of War Bonnet or Indian Creek, in Wyoming. The cavalry went on to Goose Creek, Montana.

Cody continued his services in the expeditions about the Big Horn and the chase of the defeated Sioux through the weird and rugged Yellowstone Valley. Sitting Bull was driven into Canada.

General Carr wrote his opinion that Cody's services to the army and the country by trail-

ing, finding, and fighting Indians, and thus protecting the frontier settlers, have been far beyond the compensation he has received. "His trailing, when following Indians, is simply wonderful. He is a most extraordinary hunter."

CHAPTER XVI.

BUFFALO BILL ON THE STAGE.—"NED BUNTLINE."—THE HERO IN PROPRIÂ PERSONÂ.—"TEXAS JACK" AS A PLAYER.—"THE WILD WEST SHOW" PROJECTED AND REALISED.

THE evolution of the redskin and paleface drama will be an interesting one to trace out in detail by some dramatic Darwin. The broad features can, in the meanwhile, be briefly and rapidly pointed out.

The red man who had hospitably received the Quakers in Pennsylvania, clubbed the white man in the person of Captain John Smith in Virginia, and fought against "the Bostons," in favour of King George, during the Revolution of 1776—96, disappeared from the Atlantic and Mid-United States, leaving only a few degenerate scions to peddle baskets and beaded-slippers—which latter probably inflicted more agony on the paleface conqueror than his fore-

fathers underwent at *their* forefathers' stake. The stage seized on the race gone into the realm of legends, and not only were the Leatherstocking Tales of Cooper, but those of the same stamp by Dr. Bird, Snelling, Curtis, Ingraham, and others long forgotten, dramatised, to give lustre in a new field to tragedians who had worn out the patience of audiences in the classic and Shakespearian rôles.

"Metamora," the Jibbenainosay's enemies, Gilmore Simm's ultra-refined Catawbas and other noble savages trod the boards where "the Huron" of the French Theatre had alone figured as a genuine American (!) character.

Edwin Forrest, the opponent of the native American stage to Macready, gave much time to perfecting his Metamora, but it was a conglomeration of varied types. It was often related by him with gusto that, one evening, when a party of distinguished chiefs were at his theatre, his entrance with the warwhoop, which signified "In distress — rally around me!" roused them into leaping from the box upon the stage and preparing to fight in his defence against the on-coming white soldier-supernumeraries. As a rule, however, the Spanish-

browned actor-Indian under the ostrich-feather which had last waved on the head of "the Mourning Bride," deceived not even the rawest boy in the gallery, despite a marvellous broken-English.

Later, an Indian of few words, but very much knife and tomahawk play, appeared in minor-theatre pieces, such as "Across the Continent" and "Around the World in Eighty Days."

The humourist inflicted his blows, and suggested that the Government kept a family of Indians in order at intervals to parade members through the Eastern States, now Pawnees, now Comanches, and then Apaches or Nez-percés, as the whim seized the Indian Department, just before claiming a large money appropriation. The newspapers averred that the youngest chief had been recognized, in spite of paint, as a chief who had visited New York in 1815! he had been palmed off upon the tax-payer under so many tribal appellatives that he had forgotten his origin.

The old and the new style of Indian were doomed.

An indefatigable wit stepped into the breach,

and filled it up with some creatures more alive.

This was Edward Z. C. Judson. After some maritime experience, he had entered the literary arena as an American rival to Marryat, Neale, and Barker, and, subsequently taking a liking to amateur wood-ranging, turned his pen to the concoction of flaring novels of fantastic Indians and impossible white hunters. Having gone West, and made the acquaintance of the guides and scouts of eminence, he had written romances with them as heroes, their names being familiar through press articles throughout the Eastern and Middle States, where ignorance did not suggest the corrective of a grain of salt.

One of these stories had been dramatized as "Buffalo Bill the King of Bordermen," and was being played at a New York theatre, where Mr. Cody saw it, on a visit early in 1872; the actor had followed Judson's hints, and "made-up" so much like the scout, that the audience recognized the original in the box, and cheered him until he rose and made a speech, as is expected from every remarkable citizen in the States.

His reception in the private box only was so

hearty that some theatrical managers offered him one thousand dollars a-week merely to walk on. His reply was the characteristic one that he would "rather face a thousand Indians than attempt to open his mouth" before as many people in a playhouse. But Judson was not to be shaken off by any such replies, and he continued to urge Cody to go on the stage. At length the persistency bore its desired fruit. Cody and Texas Jack were engaged and proceeded to Chicago, whither Judson came with a company to support the "stars" of an entirely new theatrical constellation. The opening night was to be the 16th December, 1872, and the scouts arrived a few days before. Short as the notice was, and with the two principals entirely novices, Judson, with that self-confidence and improvidence supposed to be inveterate in the literary man, surprised the manager and his new actors by answering :—

"I have not written the piece out yet, but it is all here!" tapping his forehead. "I shall set about it at once."

The manager was enraged.

No play! and this was Thursday, with it "billed" for Monday. He cancelled the date,

and things looked at an end. But Judson was only the more audacious at this set-back. He engaged the theatre on his own account for one week at one thousand dollars, and sat down in a hotel with copyists and wrote a farrago in about four hours, which he entitled "Scouts of the Plains."

Cody and John B. Omohundro ("Texas Jack") were given their parts, and their faces at this moment would have been capital studies for a comedy actor.

"Just get them by heart overnight," said Judson, easily, "and be perfect by rehearsal in the morning."

The dumbfounded Indian-fighters stared at the writings and then at one another. At last Jack of Texas said to Bill of the Buffaloes:—

"Bill, how long will it take you to commit your part to memory?"

With the same seriousness came the answer:

"Jack, about seven years, if I have good luck!"

Judson understood nothing of this in his old literary experience and new theatrical one. He only told them to be good boys and go to work.

Cody studied hard, and, indeed, not only knew his part but the cues, which he recited with the rest to Judson. All the "cues" the hunter-actor knew of previously were those used at billiards.

Ready or not ready, the opening night came. The theatre was full with three thousand auditors, including Gen. Sheridan and his staff.

The piece was just such claptrap and rubbish as its impromptu manufacture would lead one to anticipate. To give his novices support Ned Buntline Judson had cast himself in the part of an old trapper named Cale Durg.

When Cody made his first appearance, the simple sight of his old general and the many army officers who knew him so well, gave him an attack of stage-fright, and the hard-studied lines went whistling down the wind.

Luckily Buntline was ready. He put the natural question, "What detained you?" in a natural manner, for the *debutant* was a little late, and the latter answered as naturally with the latest event in his mind, "I have been on a hunt with Milligan."

The newspapers were full of this hunt with Milligan, or rather this hunt of Milligan, for he

was a prominent citizen of this same city of Chicago, who, being out for a pleasure excursion under the charge of Buffalo Bill, had been chased by the Indians over the plains. Encouraged by Judson, Cody related the affair, and did so in an amusing style, which took immensely with the audience. Over a pipe, fighting again in words his actions of note, there are few more genial story-tellers than our hero.

Whilst the yarn was being spun Judson passed word at the wing to have the "real live Indians" got ready, for he feared that Texas Jack was not as likely to save the piece as Buffalo Bill promised to do. Jack was wanting to take it all as actuality, and, before long—to anticipate a little—protested against the unfair treatment of the heavy villain, who, he deplored, was "sauced" by a servant-maid in one act, abused by the heroine in another, pulled about by Bill in the third, and in the fourth mauled by him; it would be more according to his ideas of the fitness of things, if he were given a gun or pistol, or, at least, a knife, and allowed to make some resistance to the scouts.

Presently, Judson, as Cale Durg, roared out

the cue for a kind of pantomimic "spill and pelt." It was: "The Injuns are upon us!" and in tumbled the irrepressible red men. These were the quarry hungered for by the scouts, who "went for them red-hot," says Mr. Cody, "until there was not breath enough in the biggest body of the foe to stir a rose-leaf on a drop of dew." The audience went wild with applause over a scene of "sensational realism" (we quote bills of the day,) never surpassed on any stage of the two Continents. No one, except themselves, seemed to regret the non-appearance of the other acts.

In the wait, Judson went about crowing: "My piece is going splendidly. Go ahead with the second act."

Thus went on the piece, or, rather, the two scouts, who blazed away with rifles and revolvers, and knocked the Indians about till the latter seemed to be figures in a Zoetrope. Neither Jack nor Bill spoke a line of the written piece. Nevertheless the press in the morning declared it the best show, of its kind, ever given in Chicago—"it was so bad that it was good," one journal specified its reasoning—but it could not see what Judson was

doing all the time if it took him four hours to write that drama!

"The Scouts of the Plains" was a constant success, and the stars might have made fortunes out of it. At all events, Cody's share was ten thousand dollars. Once accustomed to the theatre, his business talent would not let him neglect the pecuniary chances it offered. In June, 1873, he returned to it, but, this time, as his own manager. Instead of Texas Jack, he had Wild Bill with him, but the wild one was, as the manager pathetically deplores, "not an easy man to handle," and would indulge in practical jokes of the sort popular in frontier bar-rooms—shooting at the supers in the legs to see them jump, etc.

Wild Bill was killed at Deadwood, in August, 1876. His slayer was, according to one account, a gambler hired by other gamblers to put him out of their way; and, according to another, some one who cherished an old feud. The second nature of always having a weapon ready was exemplified in his drawing his revolver, even although he had received an instantly mortal wound.

When Texas Jack died, the news was tele-

graphed across the Atlantic, so much of a celebrity did he seem to the news-agents of the press. He was one of the best of the guides, and Earl Dunraven has spoken highly of him in his American travel-books.

In October, 1876, Cody returned again to the stage, and, in that and the 1879 season, cleared nearly forty thousand dollars.

With his old *pardners* dying, the buffalo disappearing, the plains portioned out in farms, and the mountain pines intermingled with the cranes and chimneys of gold-mining machinery, Cody's occupation seemed gone, and, in his lounging-room at his farm, with his neighbour Nate Salsbury urging him to continue striking the hot iron, the project of "The Wild West Show" was shaped out.

These realistic pictures of western life delighted the eastern people, and before the departure for England, had been seen by over two millions!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DEADWOOD COACH.—A NOTABLE ATTACK.—"CALAMITY SAL'S" RESCUE.—THE ABANDONED WAIF IN CLOVER.

THERE are several vehicular motions which have to be experienced to be perfectly realized. Among them are tobogganing or hand-sledging of any kind, whether on the natural slide of a snow-covered hill—with a drop of ten to twenty feet, as where a road cuts it at right angles—or on the made-up surface of a *montagne Russe;* canoeing down rapids; the "Sea on Land" of the fairs; and, perhaps above all for continual apprehension, dislocations, and a horrible death at hand, the ride in a western stage-coach over a road on the side of the Rocky Mountains.

To accomplish the miracle of a conveyance, which, although resting on the rough ground by its wheels, shall yet be sufficiently detached and ethereal not to be shaken to pieces in the first

half-hour, the body is suspended on leather braces. It is an elegant improvement on the coaches of the era of the Stuarts, when the roads in England were awaiting the beneficent hand of MacAdam.

Still, honestly wrought iron, and seasoned hickory, and leather, tanned in no modern chemical baths but in genuine oak bark, make a vehicle solid yet light. Such have executed the roll down a gulch two hundred feet deep and not been shattered.

Several of the coaches on the most frequented routes across the North American continent have had romantic and adventure-crammed careers, but they have mouldered away with no more heed than the local newspaper condescended to give to some more than commonly startling accident befalling them.

Deadwood City, however, had one coach which has been singled out for endurable fame—the coach itself has, indeed, outlasted one of the most ephemeral of the mushroom cities of the Mid-west. The "city" was burnt to ashes, and the new and respectable town, built on the calcined graves of gold-miners and gold-robbers, of sisters of charity and

beauteous barmaids, of monsters of wickedness and praiseworthy pioneers, shudders at the mention of the notorious scamps of whom the old town was proud. What rogues they were, and under what singular nicknames they flourished! "Ten-die" Brown, "Red" Clark, Wild Bill, Doc. Baggs and his *pardner* Bull, etc. Each of these "rough and toughs" had counterparts in the best types of bordermen. This was a cattle-rancher, who, in early life as a cowboy, amazed a rich farmer by galloping fifty miles in the night to restore a carpet-bag with bank-notes, and by refusing so much as a drink for the service; this other, a man who had never touched a card but learnt the game over-night and sat out a seven hours' play with the chief gamblers, under the fire of their associates, and "dead broke" them, so that they quitted the camp laughed at by their own "pals"; and "The Best Shot," the scout Charley Reynolds. If the villainous gang could have secured him as a bully they would have "cleared out" the place, but he was above their temptations. What an appropriate death for a champion marksman was his! When General Custer was surrounded by the Sioux,

Reynolds calmly viewed the scene, and said, as calmly :—"We are all 'gone up.' There is no hope for us." Then he began fighting, but being shot off his horse, he was compelled to make a breastwork of it, having caught its rein as he fell and killed it. In vain for a long time did the Indians try to approach him : after his breech-loading carbine he had two revolvers to empty, and, so good was his aim, despite his many wounds, that almost all shots were fatal. Finally he fell "shot to pieces," and the enraged savages cut off his head.

With such citizens in Deadwood, it may be conjectured that its stage-coaches left with passengers who knew how to defend their property, and with drivers who were hard men to stop ; nevertheless, the road-robbers often attempted to do so, and as often obtained the gold-dust as bullets. Sad to say, there were *employés* of the stage-coach company who gave information of the more valuable freight. They had even established a system of signalling by which the highwaymen, without venturing up to the way-stations, learnt which coach to ambush and where best to do so.

Sometimes a single desperado would stop a coach full of men who, if not taken by surprise, would have severally laughed at the fellow. At others, a numerous party would surround the coach and have their pleasure unconcerned, delaying even to pick out negotiable bills and drafts among the commercial papers.

Now and then the even tenour of their operations would be marred by the passengers being detectives, much as we have narrated when Buffalo Bill's pretended young ladies secured the bandits; and, again, returning gold-miners would fight desperately, the coach would become a fort, from which and into which the bullets crashed.

As the sides and back were leather on a wooden framework, an unappreciated genius patented an ironclad coach; but, astonishing as would have been one thus shot-proof to Indians and white marauders, a model was never tried.

In one of the most memorable stage-coach fights, nine robbers fell on the coach. They knew it would be carrying a chest of gold, and had pickets on the road to inform of its arrival at their ambuscades.

The driver was believed to be in league with

the highwaymen as he drew rein when challenged, although the company's conductor bade him drive on. This faithful servant, seeing half-a-dozen men appear to reinforce the one who had first stepped out of the road-side bushes to cry out "Stand!" had appealed to the passengers to defend themselves. All agreed, but two saved themselves without offering resistance: one dropped down on the floor of the vehicle and remained there throughout; the other left it by the door opposite the bandits and skulked in the brushwood.

The conductor fired, and the robbers poured in a volley, which killed four passengers—one of them, such was the peculiar freak of Nemesis, a Californian ruffian who had murdered his mining mate and was fleeing east to revel on the stolen gold. The conductor was shot in over twenty places, the villains using large or navy revolvers and double-barrelled shot-guns. This period was known in the West as "the shot-gun and revolver" era, by the way.

The other passengers were killed, leaving only three: the conductor, so riddled as to be believed lifeless, and the passenger in the coach bottom and his companion in the copse.

The murderers took the spoils and decamped.

When the next coach came the conductor was found just alive, and was taken to a station, nobody hoping he would recover. He had to have a leg twice amputated; the company took him back into service, and he remained there a long while, going about on an artificial leg.

On his evidence four of the highwaymen were caught and hanged; the same fate awaited the driver, implicated with them, as he confessed.

On such dangerous journeys it may readily be imagined that lady passengers were rarities. There were very few women in the West at all up to 1860, who were not upon farms with their husbands and fathers. Still, some females, *attachées* of the gambling saloons, music halls, variety shows, and dance houses, flitted from one to another mining camp, as these grew poor and worked out, and a great find of gold caused a "rush" upon another. Mostly women enervated by dissipation, they had not the stamina of the honest women who rode horses, and they patronised the coaches.

On one occasion, a representative of the class of reprobates who are Bret Harte heroines, named "Calamity Sal," was on a coach attacked by banditti. The driver refused to halt and was promptly "filled" with swanshot. It was a terrible moment, and the passengers might warrantably believe themselves in a parlous strait. But before the horses could be secured, this woman seized the reins from the dying driver's grasp, and drove off through the hail of bullets. Needless to say a purse was made up for her; but however capable of noble acts by fits and starts, these outcasts almost never reformed. The coach was riddled by the farewell shots, and was soon after condemned and left on the road-side as a useless article.

It was here that Bill Cody noticed it one day, and remembering that he had come home in it when he was overjoyed with the results of a successful scouting expedition with General Crook, he took pity on it and bought it in order it should repose in peace. But its addition to his "Wild West Show" was happily suggested, and the old vehicular celebrity of the overland route figures in the arena, the butt of a

simulated Indian attack and rescue by Buffalo Bill.

The stage-coach has, of course, succumbed to the "iron-horse," save on side roads leading to railway stations; and if ridicule kills, the very latest adventure of stage-coach robbers is sufficiently ludicrous to be the end of their exploits.

A captain of these highway gangs, repining over the gloomy lookout, was struck by the idea of plundering the stage company with a combination of finesse and the usual roughness.

He went to a town on the frontier, opened a place of business, and after becoming "one of our prominent mercantile princes," stepped into the coach offices to book a money parcel of the value of thirty thousand dollars, which he duly insured to that amount.

He then telegraphed in cipher to two of his band, who waylaid the coach at an appointed place and cleaned it out after the orthodox mode. On receiving reply-message that the order was fulfilled, the captain, still as a business man, claimed the insurance money, and was promptly informed that the company refused payment. He was still more amazed

when a writ was served on him to answer for an attempt to extort money, and for conspiracy to rob the coach.

Arrested on these charges, he found his two accomplices already in prison, whither he was conveyed. All had been true, and the pair vowed that the affair had gone off smoothly, there having been only two passengers in the coach, who had offered no resistance.

The chapter of surprises was not yet complete.

On the trial-day, the company's booking agent began by stating how, in suspicion of the customer, he had examined the pretended parcel of bank-notes before witnesses and a notary public, and it was duly recorded that it contained waste paper. He had similarly put up a roll of notes, and sent this new package on by the coach, which was stopped and robbed; a detective was one of the passengers, and he, having taken particular notice of the highwaymen, had speedily had them arrested, with the parcel in their possession.

The robbers were wondering where the second passenger was with evidence to corroborate the detective's, when the lawyer for the

prosecution pronounced his name: it was that of the judge presiding over their very trial.

The rogues were given long terms of imprisonment, and the captain was led away, deploring that he had been so clever as to depart from the traditional art of Richard Turpin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CURIOUS AND NOVEL ENTERTAINMENT.—"THE WILD WEST COMBINATION" SHOW IN THE EASTERN STATES.—ITS CHARACTERS AND FEATURES.—ITS RECEPTION IN ENGLAND.

After having cogitated the idea of an exhibition which should present certain characteristic features of the still wild Western States to the people of the manufacturing and business towns of their Eastern sisters, Messrs. Cody and Salsbury, neighbours on the North Platte River, came to a conclusion.

The project was feasible and realisable, if not difficult, by these two. Mr. Salsbury was an experienced theatrical *entrepreneur*, who had even sent a company of operetta singers to London, where they appeared at the Gaiety Theatre. Mr. Cody, almost alone of men, had the intimate acquaintance, the friendship and the hold, or grip, upon such men as would be

required, to make his side of the enterprise successful, if the public relished the novelty.

Thereupon, the collection of the strange company and quadrupedal supernumeraries was begun.

There were to be shown the almost vanished buffalo, the rapidly disappearing bighorn or mountain sheep, antelope, bears, tiger-cats, pumas, and so forth—the *fauna* of Western and South-western North America—so badly represented in the zoological gardens of the Old and New World.

Europe has hardly seen a solitary specimen of the buffalo, and certainly none in a condition which gives an adequate idea of its wild state. Some thirty years since the ingenious "Prince of Showmen," P. T. Barnum, projected a simulated buffalo hunt at New York, but the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals speedily blunted their horns and the affair became as tame as the Spanish bull-fights attempted so ludicrously in London.

As for Indians, who were to be very conspicuous in the show, only a group now and then has been taken through England and on the continent. The trouble with savages in

civilisation, their chafing at control, their inability to recognise written contracts in a land where Hercules bows to a police court summons —these obstacles have prevented our becoming familiar with the Hiawathas and Wish-ton-Wishes fresh from the wild woods. Nevertheless, the inferior red men and the squaws obey their chiefs perfectly, and when the chiefs trust in and submit to a white man like Cody they are as amenable as schoolboys.

To the animals and the savages were added horsemen and rifle and pistol-shots.

Where horses are to be caught in a string by the capable hand, they are so cheap that everybody rides; hence the "cowboy" and his southern brother the Mexican *vaquero* were compulsory for the *cast*. As for marksmen, the absence of restriction upon firearms and the value of them on the frontier against fur and feather and the featherless "biped" himself, have led to every American lad knowing how to handle a pistol by the right end at all events. On his Guy Fawkes' Day, or the Fourth of July, every budding patriot is bound to blaze away his weight in gunpowder as an undying protest against King George the Third

(poor "Farmer George" a bogey—what a ludicrous antithesis!). More to the point, it was found, at the outbreak of the great Civil War, that few of the recruits had to be taught shooting, it was already an art almost unwittingly acquired. What was even better for a public exhibition, the ability to shoot at a mark triumphantly was lodged in the fair sex as well, and Managers Cody and Salsbury had no great ado to engage lady champion rifle-shots.

With all these "*live* attractions," the project was soon in form, and the essay was delighted in, although crude enough.

After the principal cities had been visited, suggestions rained in, and many were carried out. Among others, scenery painted on the flat, and arranged in set pieces to make pieces of foreground blending with the main picture, after the manner of that in the modern circular panorama.

The programme became something better than a mere enumeration of the *dramatis personæ.* Besides scenes of emigrant trains in the desert, camping down, the camp asleep, and the like, there were others more dramatic. The Indians

were seen creeping up to surprise a settler and family in his log hot; they overwhelm it, in spite of his resistance; the whites are captured—there is an awful pause. Then Buffalo Bill and a troop of irregular horsemen dash in and sweep the red men from the stake to which they had attached their prisoner—all with as much red fire and gunshots as our fathers relished in the Astleyan "Battle of Waterloo," or the "Taking of Seringapatam."

Although the Eastern States' audiences were glutted with circuses, the Wild West Show was accepted with infinite relish. Every English tourist who saw it, vaunted its novelty, fresh colour, picturesqueness, and manliness—the very thing to stir the jaded eyes of our audiences, wearied of spectacular effects only too tinselly and too bespangled. And when Mr. Henry Irving, fresh although he was from the glories of the Night on the Brocken, pronounced it above even his praise, the managers could no longer resist the call to England.

Is more needed when H.M. the Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales have been to see it?—they have admired the lady-rifleshots, the ponies, the equestrians, and spoken to the

terrible war-chiefs with whom Mr. Gladstone had confabulated. Is not this all "in the papers?" If but all who see the Wild West Show read this little work, and all who read this see the show, we may hope thousands will be contented.

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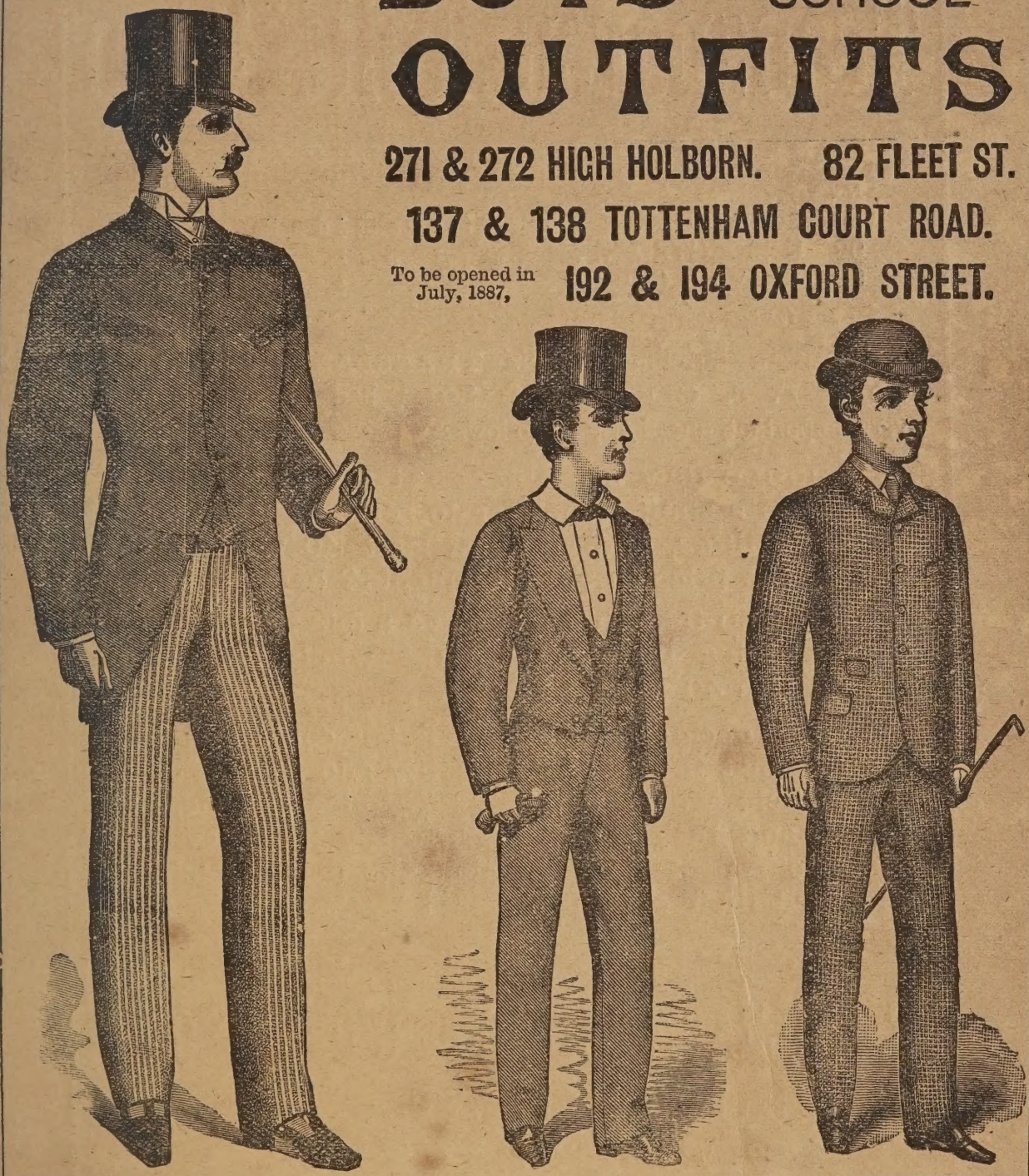

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